

Evaluation and Reconciliation Education from a Social Innovation Lens:  
A Case Study of the Haida Gwaii Institute's  
Reconciliation Studies Semester

by

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**Author's Declaration**

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

## **Abstract**

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released a report highlighting the impacts of residential schools on Indigenous people, and presented Calls to Action to redress this legacy and move forward on a path of reconciliation. Two years later, in 2017, the Haida Gwaii Institute (HGI) launched the Haida Gwaii Semester in Reconciliation Studies. Since 2010, the HGI has been offering educational programming on Haida Gwaii, British Columbia, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Haida Nation.

This research is the result of a three year partnership with the HGI as they piloted and evaluated the Reconciliation Studies Semester (RSS). This work has been guided by the tenets of community-based participatory research (CBPR), which prioritizes relationships as the basis for meaningful research between communities and researchers (Leeuw, Cameron, & Greenwood, 2012). My relationship with the HGI has been fundamental in exploring the RSS and evaluating its strengths and challenges. In this work, the HGI expressed a desire to evaluate the RSS based on the challenges encountered during the program pilot that were not predicted when the program was developed in 2015. I sought to explore the application of social innovation tools for the purposes of program evaluation through document reviews, discussions, participant observation, and five separate visits to Haida Gwaii.

I first developed a conceptual framework of best practice, which can theoretically be applied to any organization undertaking transformative education and program evaluation in cross-cultural, complex environments. This framework was developed by exploring four main bodies of literature: systems change and social innovation, transformative learning, critical Indigenous literature, and program evaluation.

This framework was applied to the RSS initially without any context, to strictly compare the program to these best practice criteria. Then, I used a multi-level perspective framework to explore niche, regime, and landscape activities which took place between 2015 and 2018 and may have impacted the program (McGowan, Westley, & Tjornbo, 2017). These activities were then overlaid onto the best practice criteria to contextualize the strengths and challenges faced by the HGI when developing and piloting the program.

Through this analysis, I determined that the RSS as a program sought to include a variety of perspectives from the Haida and Haida Gwaii communities, and utilized the concepts of Two-Eyed Seeing in the program. Two-Eyed Seeing allows Indigenous and Western epistemologies and pedagogies to be integrated and taught in the classroom without being juxtaposed or compared to one another (Iwama, Marshall, Marshall, & Bartlett, 2009). The most significant challenge faced by the RSS was developing a program evaluation, which they were unable to create simultaneously with curriculum due to capacity and expertise constraints. Finally, the national-level discussions on reconciliation fluctuated widely during this time period, which may have influenced student perception and experience (Laucius, 2017; Liberal Party of Canada, 2015).

The findings emphasize the importance of building flexibility into program design, co-developing evaluation and program content, and including local perspectives to contextualize and ground the program in place. As the HGI moves forward, the lessons learned from the RSS will improve programming for the organization and can be used as a template for reconciliation-based education in the future.

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## **Dedication**

To the lands, waters, and beings of Haida Gwaii – you have been my greatest teachers

Haawa

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## **List of Abbreviations**

CAS: complex adaptive system

CBPR: community-based participatory research

CHN: Council of the Haida Nation

DE: developmental evaluation

HGHES: Haida Gwaii Higher Education Society

HGI: Haida Gwaii Institute

HGS: Haida Gwaii Semesters

IAP2: International Association of Public Participation

IRS: Indian Residential Schools

MMIWG: missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls

P-FE: principles-focused evaluation

PAR: participatory action research

RCAP: Royal Proclamation on Aboriginal Peoples

RSS: Reconciliation Studies Semester

SSHRC: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council

TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission

U-FE: utilization-focused evaluation

UBC: University of British Columbia

UNDRIP: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

WISIR: Waterloo Institute of Social Innovation and Resilience

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

*“Research is vital to reconciliation. It provides insights and practical examples of why and how educating Canadians about the diverse concepts, principles, and practices of reconciliation contributes to healing and transformative social change.”*

Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015a, p. 242

In 2015, after seven years of traveling across Canada, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) produced a report highlighting the legacy and impact of residential schools on Indigenous people in Canada. Following the publication of this report, the TRC’s findings encouraged efforts in reconciliation and improving the relationships between governments and Indigenous people. As part of their work, the TRC created 94 Calls to Action seeking to redress the impacts of residential schools and work along a path of reconciliation. One section of the Calls to Action, entitled “Education for Reconciliation”, highlights the importance of creating age-appropriate curriculum on Indigenous people and residential schools, integrating Indigenous pedagogies into classrooms, and undertaking research to advance understanding of reconciliation (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015b).

This research is the result of two years of working with the Haida Gwaii Institute (HGI), a research and educational institution located on Haida Gwaii, British Columbia. The organization has been offering programming to post-secondary students since 2010, with a focus on natural resource management (Haida Gwaii Institute, 2019a). In 2017, the HGI piloted the Haida Gwaii Semester in Reconciliation Studies, also referred to as the Reconciliation Studies Semester (RSS). This program, which ran for two years, brought students from across Canada to the communities of Haida Gwaii to learn from local and off-island educators about topics related to Indigenous peoples, colonization, and reconciliation.

The programming offered by the HGI strives to provide transformative learning opportunities that are inspired by Haida Gwaii (Haida Gwaii Institute, 2018a). Haida Gwaii as an environment provides grounded examples of the challenges, opportunities, and successes of reconciliation and decolonization in action. Over the last several decades, the Haida Nation has become a leading example in advancing Indigenous rights and sovereignty. Having established their own government system, the Council of the Haida Nation (CHN) in 1974, the Haida have worked to develop co-management agreements with the Federal and Provincial governments for the lands and waters of Haida Gwaii (Collison, 2018). They have also been instrumental in advancing the Constitutional Duty to Consult through the court system in their 2004 case against the British Columbia government (Supreme Court of Canada, 2004). Most recently, the Haida are in the process of having Aboriginal title of their territory formally recognized through a court case being heard through the Supreme Court (Hudson, 2018a). These activities have made Haida Gwaii a prime environment to hosting educational content around reconciliation.

## **1.1 Research Objectives**

This research began as a comprehensive evaluation of the RSS with the intent of developing a program evaluation template. Over the last three years, this focus has shifted into exploring the utility of complexity concepts in program evaluation with a focus on the RSS. Due to the complex nature of the topic of reconciliation as well as the context the RSS operates within, exploring cross-scale dynamics of this system yield additional insights that would not come out of evaluating the program in isolation. While there are underlying tenets of best practice for undertaking the type of education and evaluation the HGI offer through the RSS, there are additional, contextually sensitive considerations that must be taken into account when evaluating



the program. The intent of this research is to evaluate the strengths and opportunities of the RSS while considering the landscape and interactions across scales that influence the program.

There are two primary objectives of this master's thesis:

- 1) Develop a best-practice framework for program evaluation of transformative education in cross-cultural and complex contexts; and,
- 2) Evaluate the RSS and the HGI against these best-practice criteria and provide wise-practice recommendations.

## **1.2 Note on Terminology**

In accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), I will be using Indigenous as the chosen terminology when referring to the First Peoples in Canada (United Nations, 2007). This term is both accepted at the international scale, resolutions such as UNDRIP, and is becoming more common in Canadian legislation. Most recently, this term appeared in a bill tabled by the Government of British Columbia in October 2019, which sought to implement UNDRIP in the province (Government of British Columbia, 2019). The bill was successfully passed in November 2019, making British Columbia the first province to legally implement UNDRIP, and signifying another important step forward in recognizing Indigenous rights in legally enforceable ways (Government of British Columbia, 2019).

There are other terms referring to Indigenous people that will appear throughout this thesis. The Government of Canada uses the term *Aboriginal*, most often in legal contexts, to refer to First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples (Government of Canada, 1982). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) uses both terms, and the names of specific Indigenous Nations when

appropriate. When speaking specifically about the activities of the Haida Nation on Haida Gwaii, I will use the term Haida. The term “Indian” will be used in reference to policies such as the *Indian Act*, and “Aboriginal” will be used from direct quotes and when referring to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Otherwise, I will use Indigenous for consistency throughout this thesis.

### **1.3 Statement of Positionality**

*“Participatory, community-based research is fundamentally driven by relationships”*

Leeuw, Cameron, & Greenwood, 2012, p. 188

Relational accountability is a foundational concept found throughout critical Indigenous and cross cultural research methodologies (see for example (Carlson, 2017; Chouinard & Cousins, 2009; Wilson, 2007)). Based on the underlying premise that relationships form the basis for Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies, we as researchers cannot separate ourselves from our work and we should therefore place our work specifically in a relational context (Wilson, 2007). This research, in its current form, would not have been possible without the development of relationships with the HGI over the last five years. I describe the development of this research in more detail in the Methodology and Methods chapter of this thesis, but this work has all been built off of the foundation of the relationships between the HGI and our research team.

I am a third generation settler in Canada. My maternal and paternal grandparents immigrated to Canada from Germany and Greece, respectively, in the early 1950s following the Second World War. They came to Canada to try and build a better life for their families, and in doing so benefitted and took advantage of broken treaty promises between the Federal and Provincial governments and Indigenous people. I was born in Calgary, Alberta, which is Treaty 7 territory

and home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III. When I was two and a half years old, my parents and I moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba so my father could take up a job as a professor in Geography at the University of Winnipeg. Winnipeg is located on Treaty 1 territory, home of the Ojibway, Dene, Cree, Oji-Cree, and Dakota people, and is the Heart of the Métis Nation Homeland. I continue to benefit from the broken treaty promises, and I would like to acknowledge the privileges that I bring into my research. I am a white woman of European ancestry. I grew up relatively affluent and have been educated and trained in Western post-secondary institutions. I cannot fully understand the full implications of my privilege as it is all I have known throughout my life. However, over the last five years that I have begun to understand and unpack my privilege and its assumptions, I have been fortunate enough to have been mentored by wonderful Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge keepers and experts. These mentors have kindly helped me understand the roles that I as a non-Indigenous researcher can play in undertaking this work, and the strengths and limitations that my lived experience can bring to this field of research.

I first became acquainted with the HGI when I was in the fourth year of my undergraduate degree at the University of Winnipeg. I had stayed in my hometown for university, so I was looking for a “study abroad” or similar type of program that would allow me to continue my education while being provided the opportunity to live and learn in a different environment. I happened to hear about the HGI through the Secretary of the Geography Department at my university, who often sent out various scholarships and study opportunities through a student mailing list. Since my undergraduate degree was in environmental science, finding a 4-month program in Natural Resources seemed like the ideal fit. I debated between taking the Natural Resource Studies or the Natural Resource Sciences semester, since at the time I was considering

whether I wanted to pursue natural or social sciences. I applied and was accepted to both programs, but ultimately chose to just participate in the Natural Resource Science semester in the fall of 2015. The other 20 students in the program were primarily from British Columbia, Ontario, and the Maritimes, and I found myself being the only student from the prairies. I lived in the community of HlGaagilda (*Skidegate*), in a house with three other female students. Two were studying Environment, Resources, and Sustainability at the University of Waterloo, and the other was studying Geography at the University of British Columbia. We became close to one another, and also developed friendships and positive relationships with the staff of the HGI. When I had personal issues arise, I was met with support and accommodation from the staff, and they displayed this support to all the students in the program. As a whole, the organization felt very intimate and welcoming and I never felt afraid to ask for help when needed. The knowledge and experience I gained through my semester program inspired me to look more into the intersection of Indigenous issues and environmental management in the final years of my undergraduate program. My familiarity with the HGI staff and the organization as a whole was one of the reasons I was so keen to work on this project, since I already had a relationship with them and would not have to start this work from square one in terms of building up a trusting working relationship.

My own experience with the HGI has been a piece of my transformative learning experience. After participating in the 2015 fall semester in Natural Resource Science through the HGI, during which I lived and learned on Haida Gwaii for four months, I was increasingly intrigued about research and education that happens in cross-cultural and Indigenous contexts. Spending a good portion of each semester course out on the land, learning from local Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators about the importance of the land was unlike anything I had experienced in

my post-secondary education career up until that point. As well, the program was the first time I was exposed to systems thinking and complexity. This way of thinking was at first confusing and jarring, but continues to become clearer as I navigate my research. Through my education, I realized that I have always understood the world through a complexity lens, and I have now been given the language to describe the way in which I see the world. Many of the lessons I took from my time in the HGI programming became apparent in the months and years after I “graduated” from the program. I anticipate that this learning journey will continue after the completion of my Master’s as a result of working in this complex, dynamic environment.

Since I began my work with the HGI, I have tried to pay attention to how I, as a non-Indigenous, non-resident of Haida Gwaii, fit into this research project. Being deeply embedded in a community, where your work life can bleed into your personal life, it can be difficult to step back and see the larger picture. From my own experience, when you are in the middle of something that is vitally important to you, it can be difficult to cast a critical eye and take the time to reflect. It is not always a given that we have the time or space to look at the bigger picture and take a snapshot of the world around us. I think that as an outsider, I am removed enough from the environment of Haida Gwaii that I can examine the HGI with more impartiality than if I was a full-time employee of the organization or personally interacted with it on a daily basis. However, that is not to say that being an outsider does not present its own set of challenges. For example, I have spent four and a half months on Haida Gwaii since I began my research in September 2017. Despite the fact that I had lived on Haida Gwaii for four months as a student two years prior, the duration of these visits do not provide sufficient time to fully understand and describe the context. The islands and communities of Haida Gwaii are dynamic and ever-changing. I cannot understand the challenges of living on a small island archipelago in

British Columbia, nor can I fully comprehend the tricky ground of navigating research and education goals in a small town. Because of my physical distance from Haida Gwaii, I am able to distance myself from my work in ways that I know the people working with the HGI are unable to. Capturing this complexity was never going to be an easy task, and I in no way think that my interpretation of the HGI landscape is the full picture. Rather, I hope that my view as an outside researcher helps provide an additional perspective, collecting and presenting data in ways which might allow the HGI staff to “step back” and see the complexity of their work in a new way.

Although I am an outsider to this organization and community, I have some familiarity and insight. As a former student, who lived on Haida Gwaii for 4 months, I feel I can express opinions in regards to some of the unique aspects to living and working on Haida Gwaii, but I fully acknowledge that I am not of the community and lack lived experience. My experience as a student also gave me initial insight into the organization itself and created the basis for the relationships I have with staff today. Furthermore, since starting my Master’s research I have worked as a Teaching Assistant (TA) for three courses offered by the HGI. I believe that these experiences have offered insight into the structures and processes of the organization that I would not have had if I had undertaken this research with no prior experience or understanding of the HGI. Through working alongside the HGI over the last three years, I have developed a relationship with the individuals within the organization and greater community that have granted me valuable insight that would have not been possible without regular visits to Haida Gwaii. I am incredibly fortunate to have been invited to Haida Gwaii so many times throughout this research and this work would not have been possible without these relationships.

## 1.4 Thesis Structure

This thesis is laid out in the following format:

*Chapter 2: History of Colonization in Canada* – this chapter is intended to provide a brief summary of the historical and ongoing relationship between Canada and Indigenous peoples. Although not an exhaustive account of the past 500 years of colonization, this chapter contextualizes the importance of research and education that are culturally competent and appropriate.

*Chapter 3: Literature Review* – this chapter serves to develop a conceptual framework to satisfy the first objective of this research. I explore four main bodies of literature: systems change and complexity, transformative learning, critical Indigenous literature, and program evaluation. After describing the foundational underpinnings of each, I create a conceptual framework which summarizes the similarities across the four themes and serves as a best-practice template to be used in evaluating programs.

*Chapter 4: Case Study* – the case study explores the Haida Gwaii Institute (HGI), while firmly grounding it in the context of Haida Gwaii. Since Haida Gwaii is an environment that may be unfamiliar to many readers, this chapter provides concise overview of the historical and current context of Haida Gwaii to situate the organization in context. As well, this chapter introduces the organizational and program structures of the HGI to assist in subsequent description and analysis in the following chapters.

*Chapter 5: Methodology and Methods* – Structured in a narrative format, this chapter describes the evolution of my research process, objectives, and methods. I identify the epistemological underpinnings of my research, and identify the qualitative research methods I have used in my

data collection and analysis. I describe how I arrived at my current research objectives and methods, as well as the process for ensuring the quality of my data and findings.

*Chapter 6: Findings and Analysis* – In this chapter, I present the results from exploring the RSS and HGI over several spatial and temporal scales. I then evaluate the program compared to the conceptual framework of best practice developed out of the literature review. Finally, I synthesize the program analysis with the scalar description to yield insights into contextual elements that may have influenced the program and its uptake. I also describe the limitations of my research

*Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendations* – In the final chapter of this thesis, I summarize the main tenets of best practice from the literature and conceptual framework, as well as the key findings from my analysis of the RSS. I also provide conceptual, evaluation, and program-specific recommendations and suggestions for future work and research.



## **CHAPTER TWO: HISTORY OF COLONIZATION IN CANADA**

*“The colonial experience is embedded in the spirit of the people and in the fabric of society”*

Shilling, 2002, p. 151

This brief chapter serves to provide essential background information on some of the history of colonization in Canada. The importance of critical Indigenous and decolonizing methodologies and pedagogies can only properly be understood with some understanding of the past and present realities facing Indigenous people in Canada. This chapter includes a brief overview of some of the major events, policies and ideologies that have pervaded throughout Canadian history, a more in-depth description of the Indian Residential School (IRS) system, and historical approaches to research with Indigenous people. The intent is not to provide a comprehensive overview but to help the reader understand the broader context of this work as well as the justification for the use of the methodological frameworks.

### **2.1 History of Indigenous People and Canada**

As the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples pointed out, “it is impossible to make sense of the issues that trouble the relationship [between Aboriginal peoples and Canada] today without a clear understanding of the past” (Dussault et al., 1996, p. 36). Understanding the legacy of colonialism and how it has contributed to the current state of Indigenous people in Canada is critical when undertaking any work related to Indigenous people (Saskamoose, Bellegarde, Sutherland, Pete, & McKay-McNabb, 2017). Over the last 500+ years, Indigenous people in Canada have experienced disproportionate levels of hardships and, “social, economic, and health burdens” relative to non-Indigenous people as the result of colonial policies (Castleden, Morgan, & Lamb, 2012, p. 161; Smith, 1999). For this reason, the following section

will describe some of the key activities, policies, programs, and approaches that have taken place over the 500 years since sustained European contact and occupation in North America.

Around the time of European contact to North America, which began on a large scale around 500 years ago, imperialism and other European ideologies began focusing on the notion of “Others” when interacting with new, previously unknown cultures (Dussault et al., 1996; Smith, 1999). Indigenous people around the world were viewed as “sub-human” because they had different customs and ways of knowing than the dominant Eurocentric views (Smith, 1999). During the fifteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church began formalizing the idea that Christian societies were civilized, and other societies and cultures that were not Christian were therefore uncivilized and could be colonized (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015a). Colonization of North America was justified largely by the Doctrine of Discovery, a series of arguments developed out of papal bulls decreed by the Pope in 1493 claiming that the Spanish could colonize North America and other areas if they converted Indigenous people to Christianity (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015a). Related to this, the Doctrine of Discovery also heavily relied on the notion of *terra nullius*. Translating to “vacant” or “empty land”, *terra nullius* is a term often used in the literature regarding European colonization of North America, referring to land that is sparsely occupied, with no sovereignty and little to no established property (Fitzmaurice, 2007). Land was deemed to be empty if inhabitants followed migratory subsistence patterns, or were not using the land according to European expectations of land ownership (Reid, 2010). European settlers could claim *terra nullius* because Indigenous people did not appear to own the land they occupied (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015a).

Some of the first Europeans to arrive in North America worked and co-operated with Indigenous people, treating one another as political equals (Dussault et al., 1996). Although some accounts

of early contact are positive, there are also many accounts of tension and hardship, with conflict and disease killing more and more Indigenous people as the number of European newcomers increased (Dussault et al., 1996; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015a). By the 1700s, there were approximately equal numbers of European settlers and Indigenous people in North America (Dussault et al., 1996). The relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in North America became particularly significant in 1763, with the signing of the *Royal Proclamation of 1763* (the Proclamation) (Dussault et al., 1996). This document was created as the result of the Treaty of Paris, in which New France (today parts of the Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and several US States) was ceded to Britain after they defeated France in the Seven Years War (Dussault et al., 1996). The Proclamation formalized and laid out the relationship moving forward between the Crown (at the time being the British government) and Indigenous people (Dussault et al., 1996). It recognized Indigenous people as autonomous groups that are granted protection under the Crown and that their lands cannot be taken up without their consent (Dussault et al., 1996). However, one quirk is that although it acknowledges Indigenous “ownership” of land, the Proclamation also states that these lands are already under control of the Crown, which sets up the potential for land ownership conflicts (Dussault et al., 1996).

Moving into the 1800s, European settlement continued to expand, outnumbering Indigenous people and displacing many Indigenous nations out of their territories (Dussault et al., 1996). Prior to Confederation, the British government were trying to assimilate Indigenous people into the dominant European society. A piece of legislation that was enacted in an attempt to speed up this process was *An Act to encourage the gradual Civilization of the Indian Tribes in this Province, and to amend the Laws respecting Indians*, introduced in 1857 in an attempt to

eliminate and reduce the distinctions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (Leslie, 2002). By 1860, the British government no longer wanted to deal with administration related to Indigenous people, and formally turned this responsibility over to the Province of Canada, which turned into the Dominion of Canada in 1867 (Leslie, 2002). These pieces of legislation set the stage for the relationship Canada would have with Indigenous people as it became an independent country.

The relationship between Indigenous people and the Crown also continued to evolve and “formalize” (from a European perspective) with the introduction of written treaties, setting aside reserve lands and other benefits for Indigenous people in exchange for sharing the land and resources with non-Indigenous people (Dussault et al., 1996). There were treaties signed in Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritimes prior to Canadian Confederation, but the Government of Canada began making treaties with the Numbered Treaties from 1871 to 1921 (Dussault et al., 1996; Saskamoose et al., 2017). Unlike previous treaties, which were negotiated and agreed upon orally, the numbered treaties were written documents (Dussault et al., 1996). These written documents would have been inaccessible to most Indigenous people who were unable to read them, and there is the possibility that what was agreed to orally was not translated onto the written documents which the Crown used as the legally binding version of the treaties (Dussault et al., 1996). In most cases, the Crown knowingly did not fulfill its treaty promises for financial, implementation, or convenience reasons (Dussault et al., 1996). The failure of the Crown to fulfill its promises is still playing out in the Canadian court system today, and the legacy of this failure continues to affect Indigenous people across the country.

When Canada became a country in 1867, “protection of Indian people and Indian lands” was designated under federal control through Section 91(24) of the *British North America Act*

(Leslie, 2002, p. 24). In order to consolidate all the pre-Confederation legislation, the branch of Indian Affairs developed the *Indian Act* in 1876 (Leslie, 2002). One of the largest pieces of legislation that has impacted and continues to impact Indigenous people in Canada, the *Indian Act* is still in place today with only minor modifications (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015a). The *Indian Act* was deliberately racist in its wording and intention, and ultimately sought to destroy Indigenous cultures and to assimilate Indigenous people into “mainstream” Canadian society (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015a). Among dozens of other things, the *Indian Act* determines who is and is not “Indian”, banned the Potlatch and other spiritual and cultural ceremonies, limits the power of reserve band councils, and dictates how and when band council elections take place (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015a). One of the most prolific quotes that highlights the official government perspective on Indigenous people is from Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs from 1913-1932 (Leslie, 2002). Scott is quoted in 1920 as having said:

“Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and No Indian Department, that is the objective of this Bill [the new *Indian Act* amendments]” (Leslie, 2002, p. 25).

Despite amendments, revisions, and attempts to abolish the *Indian Act* altogether (most prominently being the 1969 “White Paper”, in which Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau petitioned to end Indian status), Canada is still forcing Indigenous communities across the country to operate under the jurisdiction of the *Indian Act* (Leslie, 2002). Today, the *Indian Act* still determines who is a “status Indian”, sets out provisions for elections and Chief and Council (the *Indian Act* government system found on reserves), and delegates reserve lands and band money (Coates, 2008; Government of Canada, 1985; Imai, 2012). The relationship between Indigenous people and the Crown is also enshrined in the Constitution, stating in Section 91.24

that “Indians, and Lands reserved for the Indians” is the responsibility of the Government of Canada (Government of Canada, 1982). The *Indian Act* continues to be a painful reminder of the legacy and impact of colonization, and impedes efforts in reconciliation.

## **2.2 The Indian Residential Schools System**

Beyond overseeing most aspects of daily life and governance for Indigenous people, the *Indian Act* was also the key piece of legislation governing the Indian Residential Schools (IRS) system (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015a). The IRS system was first formally introduced into Indigenous communities in the 1850s as several churches opened up boarding schools for Indigenous children, with the federal government’s involvement picking up in the 1880s (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015a). In 1883 the federal government began its involvement by opening three residential schools in western Canada, and by 1930 there were 80 residential schools operating across the country with federal assistance (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015c).

There are numerous intentions behind the IRS system, including political assimilation, and a desire for Indigenous culture and spirituality to be minimized as much as possible (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015a). These intentions were all based on the epistemological assumptions, which also supported the colonization of North America, that European civilization was superior to Indigenous cultures and that Indigenous children must be “civilized” if they wanted to succeed in Canadian society (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015c). The IRS system was a clear attempt to diminish and destroy Indigenous identity and “to kill the Indian in the child” (Indigenous Foundations, 2009). These practices have broadly been referred to as cultural genocide, due to their systematic and deliberate targeting of Indigenous people in Canada (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015a).

Indian agents (federally appointed employees in charge of monitoring day to day life on the reserves), priests, or Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officers, would show up at the homes of Indigenous families and take children off to school, often forcibly or under threat of persecution (Dussault et al., 1996; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015c). Placed onto planes, trains, and trucks, children were taken often thousands of kilometres away to attend residential schools (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015c). Regulations were put in place to compel parents to enroll their children in residential schools, and gave Indian agents the authority to place children into schools against their parents' will (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015a). In the schools, the conditions were deplorable, with derelict buildings, insufficient diets, harsh discipline, and cultural suppression built into the structure and operation (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015c). Furthermore, the schools institutionalized neglect since they were chronically understaffed, which also allowed many children to become victims of physical and sexual abuse under the hands of priests, nuns, and teachers (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015c). Children were typically forced to cut their hair, give up their clothes in exchange for school uniforms, assigned numbers, separated from their siblings, and forbidden from speaking their languages (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015c). The IRS system operated with very few regulations, and operated largely based on whatever was laid out in the *Indian Act* (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015c). Over the 100+ years the IRS system operated in Canada, at least 150,000 First Nation, Métis, and Inuit children attended residential schools (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015c). One of the most shocking facts is that although the churches stopped formally being involved in 1969, the last federally funded residential school did not close until 1996 (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015c).

These historical and contemporary policies have harmed and marginalized Indigenous people in Canada for centuries (Castleden et al., 2012). Furthermore, these assimilationist and colonial policies have led some Indigenous people to be ashamed of their culture and identity (Lavallee, 2009). These policies and their underlying assumptions are echoed in the ways research was historically undertaken in Indigenous communities, which has created its own harmful legacy.

### **2.3 Historical Approaches to Research with Indigenous People**

Beyond colonial policies, research and academia have also played a role in the current state of Indigenous people in Canada. Since the Industrial Revolution in the 1800s, research and academia have focused on positivist, reductionist approaches, and have pushed out certain voices, including Indigenous peoples (Kovach, 2005). Early research protocols focused almost solely on the notion of research subjects, which were inanimate and non-autonomous objects (Smith, 1999). Indigenous people were viewed as the subjects of research, which allowed them to be studied *on*, and for research protocols to largely ignore Indigenous ownership of knowledge (Drawson, Toombs, & Mushquash, 2017). The Western research paradigm has often led to unethical research processes in Indigenous communities, with few (if any) research benefits being returned to the community under study (Koster, Baccar, & Lemelin, 2012). Research has therefore been described as a “dirty word” by many Indigenous people, and has created general wariness towards the Western research process and a broader research culture that perpetuates colonial attitudes (Smith, 1999). Non-Indigenous researchers undertaking work with or in Indigenous communities run the risk of perpetuating colonial stereotypes in research (Leeuw et al., 2012). There are many common grievances voiced by Indigenous people related to research, including that: communities have been over-researched, communities are researched without their knowledge or consent, researchers have benefitted with little benefits being returned to



communities, informed consent has not been given, and that the portrayal of communities has often been negative (Castleden et al., 2012; First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2014).

The concept that Indigenous people were less than Europeans also allowed Indigenous knowledge to be commodified, and legitimized the theft of knowledge, property and cultural “artifacts” (Smith, 1999). The removal of Indigenous knowledge from its place of origin was further problematized due to its inherent context dependence, discussed further in 3.4.3 Indigenous Pedagogy – An Alternative Education Approach (Hatcher, Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2009). Knowledge being removed from communities without any benefits returned to communities has meant that many Indigenous people today are unwilling to participate in research processes (Castleden et al., 2012).

The complicated social, cultural, political and economic conditions of Indigenous people in Canada is the result of historical and current policies, processes, and attitudes. The current state of collective dependency of Indigenous people in Canada is the result of ongoing and multi-generational colonialism, both formal and informal (Alfred, 2009). Historical approaches to Indigenous research have been problematic in many regards, and contemporary research practices should strive to move away from these colonial and assimilationist approaches.

## **CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This literature review explores four main concepts related to the Haida Gwaii Institute's (HGI) Reconciliation Studies Semester): systems thinking and complexity, transformative and place-based education models, critical Indigenous research and pedagogy, and alternative evaluation practices. The overall goal of this literature review was to create a framework identifying tenets of best practice across these four broad themes. This framework is not specifically tailored to the Haida Gwaii Institute (HGI) or the Reconciliation Studies Semester (RSS), and can be applied to any program or organization undertaking education and evaluation in complex, cross-cultural contexts. In the results and analysis chapter of this thesis, the framework created at the end of this chapter will be applied to examine the strengths and opportunities for improvement within the RSS.

This work examines the HGI's RSS from a systems perspective because both the organization and the program are profoundly impacted and affected by activities happening at other scales, from the individuals involved in the program to larger, nation-wide discussions on reconciliation and education. Although systems thinking is a western approach often rooted in ecology (BeLue, Carmack, Myers, Weinreb-Welch, & Lengerich, 2012; Checkland, 2000; Flood, 2010; Holling, 2001), the multiple scales with which it examines a given context aligns with many Indigenous worldviews which explore and view the world holistically (Hatcher et al., 2009; McNally, 2004).

The literature around complexity and systems thinking often discusses how institutions and organizations can be described as complex adaptive systems (Boal & Schultz, 2007; Duit & Galaz, 2008; Hartvigsen, Kinzig, & Peterson, 1998; Holling, 2001; Lansing, 2003).

Understanding concepts related to complexity will allow me to unpack the context the HGI

operates within and what some of the challenges may be when implementing reconciliation-focused education.

Transformative and place-based educations are two pedagogical approaches that were also created under Western models of education (Baumgartner, 2012; B. Bell, 2003; Calderon, 2014; Castleden, Daley, Morgan, & Sylvestre, 2013; Mezirow, 1978). Although place-based education relates to some Indigenous epistemological assumptions, such as the land being intimately tied to knowledge, neither this or transformative learning are inherently Indigenous in their methods, approaches, or epistemological underpinnings (Donald, 2009; Scully, 2012). Similarly, the HGI is a non-Indigenous organization and does not claim to teach based on an Indigenous pedagogy. The HGI brands itself as providing experiential education through transformative and place-based learning opportunities. For these reasons, it is important to understand and explore these pedagogical concepts, both in their origins and the forms they take in contemporary discussions on education.

The critical Indigenous perspective (for example: Ahenakew, 2017; Castleden, Morgan, & Lamb, 2012; Dawson, Toombs, & Mushquash, 2017; Kovach, 2005; Leeuw, Cameron, & Greenwood, 2012; L. T. Smith, 1999) is essential in exploring this work. Due to the content of the Reconciliation Studies Semester (RSS), it is essential to situate this program in the larger context of Indigenous people in Canada. The history of colonization and assimilation that Indigenous people in Canada have experienced is imperative to this type of programming and research broadly. Current approaches to Indigenous research have helped me to frame the way in which I have undertaken this work and understood my relationship as a researcher to the HGI and the larger Haida Gwaii community. Indigenous pedagogy and ways of knowing not only relate to concepts which underlay systems thinking such as interconnectedness (Westley, Patton,

& Zimmerman, 2006), but also provide alternative approaches to education beyond transformative and place-based education, which are both Western models of education. These Indigenous-based models of education offer additional opportunities to decolonize university education in ways that are salient and relevant to the content of the program.

Finally, program evaluation is an important component when considering the actions of the HGI and the RSS moving forward. The initial goal and intent of this research was to develop an evaluative framework for the RSS based on discussions with the HGI on what the immediate needs of the program were for the next two years as the semester was piloted. However, after running the RSS program for two years, the HGI has chosen to undergo a more comprehensive review of the RSS to refine the goals and objectives of the program, which may include a more substantive reorganization of the program, both in terms of content and structure. For these reasons, although a program evaluation is not the primary focus of my research, evaluation will still be critically important for the HGI moving forward when appraising the program and navigating next steps as it evolves.

## **3.2 Systems Change**

### **3.2.1 Systems Thinking**

In its simplest terms, a system can be broadly defined as a group of components interacting with one another (Cabrera, Colosi, & Lobdell, 2008). Systems thinking, a holistic approach to viewing the world, emerged as a discipline in the 1950s as a way to understand these components and their interactions with one another and the environment (Checkland, 2000). Within the field of systems, there are “hard” systems, which are distinct entities that can be engineered and tend to be biophysical or mechanical in nature, and “soft” systems, which are less easily defined and often include social and cultural dimensions (Checkland, 2000). For the following sections, any

mention of systems will be based on soft systems methodology (See Checkland (2000) for a more in-depth explanation of the history of hard and soft systems).

Systems thinking as an approach is the “process of understanding how a group of interacting, interrelated, interdependent components influence each other within the whole” (Czarnecki, 2012, p. 1). It is interdisciplinary, and combines many fields of knowledge and theory including complexity, systems dynamics, and network theory (Hargreaves & Podems, 2012). Systems thinking is an analytical tool, with strong roots in ecology, which is now used to understand ecological, economic, and social systems (Holling, 2001). Systems thinking is used largely to understand equilibrium states, and assists in describing system dynamics through linear processes and feedback loops (Duit & Galaz, 2008).

Systems are defined by their relationships and connections (Westley et al., 2006). There are four concepts that make up systems thinking: Distinction, System, Relationship, and Perspective (Cabrera et al., 2008, p. 304). Not all components make up a system, so it is necessary to draw boundaries and distinguish what is part of the system and what is considered an externality (Cabrera et al., 2008). All systems are comprised of components and sub-systems, and each system in turn is likely nested within a larger system (Cabrera et al., 2008; Ramalingam, Jones, Reba, & Young, 2008). All system components interact with one another, forming relationships that will change and dictate overall system behaviour (Cabrera et al., 2008). Finally, any system under study will look different depending on who is viewing it (Cabrera et al., 2008).

Understanding one’s perspective, or frame of reference, is critical when exploring systems as an analytical tool (Cabrera et al., 2008). Systems thinking is not a way to master or control the world, but offers tools to understand and anticipate uncertainty (Meadows, 2002). Using systems

thinking in practice requires monitoring, because systems are constantly organizing and reorganizing through feedbacks and observations of its interactions (O’Sullivan, 2002).

Systems thinking can be expanded in order to understand and solve “complex” problems.

Broadly, problems are divided into three main categories: simple, complicated, and complex (Westley et al., 2006). Although not all systems are complex, systems thinking as a tool requires complex thinking (Cabrera et al., 2008). Complex problems and complex systems are interdependent, with self-organizing behaviours (Patton, 2010). One of the limitations of conventional systems theory is that it largely does not consider adaptation and variation of individuals and groups within a system (Hartvigsen et al., 1998). To address the issues of adaptation and to take complexity sufficiently into account, complex adaptive systems (CAS) theory (Holland, 2014) was developed as a modeling tool to help describe and understand complex problems, described in more detail below.

### **3.2.2 Complexity**

Complexity, although sometimes described as part of a theory or a science, will be utilized in this thesis as a lens with which to view and think about the world (Patton, 2010; Ramalingam et al., 2008). Complexity embraces the concept that the world is unpredictable and constantly changing, where components and variables evolve over time in ways that are emergent and uncertain (Westley et al., 2006). Only when the uncertainty and unpredictability of systems are embraced can complexity be used as a tool and approach to tackle complex problems (Holling, 2001). Generally, there are six main interdependent characteristics of complexity: nonlinearity, uncertainty, adaptation, emergence, coevolution, and dynamical systems change (Patton, 2010, p. 124). These concepts are described in Table 1, below.

**Table 1. Main Concepts of Complexity**

Concept	Description
Nonlinearity	Considered to be the underlying assumption for complexity theory, nonlinearity means system behaviours may be greatly affected by comparatively small actions (Duit & Galaz, 2008; Lansing, 2003; Patton, 2010; Westley & Laban, 2012). These impacts are often unknown <i>and</i> unknowable, and outcomes may result that were entirely unplanned or unpredicted at the initial conditions (Patton, 2010).
Uncertainty	Many system processes and components are uncertain, unpredictable, and unknowable (Patton, 2010). Uncertainty arises when there is not enough information to assess the likelihood of occurrence or the potential consequences (Patton, 2010).
Adaptation	As elements of a system interact, they react and adapt to one another and their environment (Patton, 2010). As interrelated system components interact they may cause the overall behaviour of the system to change (Boal & Schultz, 2007).
Emergence	Patterns of organization will develop over time that will likely have a greater impact on the system than these individuals would on their own due to complex systems' self-organizing behaviours (Duit & Galaz, 2008; Patton, 2010).
Coevolution	As agents within a system interact and adapt, new actions and processes are developed that would not have existed otherwise (Duit & Galaz, 2008; Patton, 2010).
Dynamical Systems Change	Complex systems inherently change over time as system components interact and adapt (Patton, 2010). Dynamical system patterns are unpredictable, where the trajectory is unknown and fluctuates in a variety of ways. Small changes in a system can have significant enough impacts to create a system-wide change (Patton, 2010).

There are largely two views to complexity. One view is that since complexity is anything that we do not understand, it is best to embrace the uncertainty and focus on isolated subsystems and their interactions (Holling, 2001; Roe, 1998). The other view of complexity is that it is not controlled by an insurmountable number of processes and interactions, but rather by a few key controlling processes (Holling, 2001). If properly identified, understanding and monitoring these select processes will generate knowledge about the system in a way that allows for clear communication about system dynamics while still acknowledging the complexity (Holling, 2001).

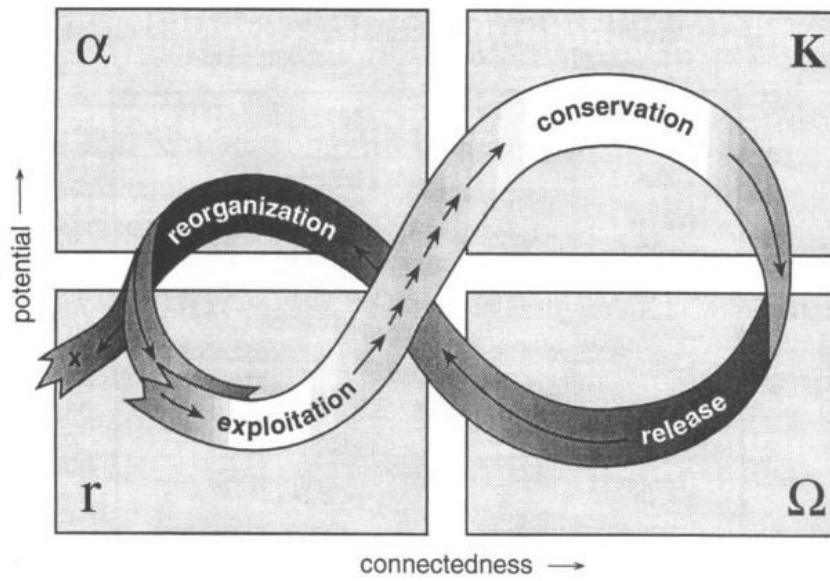
### **3.2.3 Complex Adaptive Systems**

Complex systems are those with a high enough level of intricacy and interrelation that they exhibit emergent properties that cannot be understood by examining the components in isolation (Boal & Schultz, 2007). These systems are more often referred to as complex adaptive systems (CAS), a theory which takes self-organization into account and the implications individual actions and interactions have on the system at large (Hartvigsen et al., 1998). There is no single definition of a CAS with unanimous agreement, but there are four components that are generally used when describing and defining CAS (Duit & Galaz, 2008). All CAS are comprised of *agents*, which can be any unit of organization, from individual organisms to government departments (Duit & Galaz, 2008). These agents *self-organize* within the system, since CAS do not have a central authority, which results in new *co-evolutionary* processes as agents try to optimize their fit within the overall system (Duit & Galaz, 2008). This causes subsequent *changes in system behaviour that are emergent* because they could not have been predicted by examining the individual agents of the system in isolation (Duit & Galaz, 2008).



CAS builds on system theory, but places more focus on adaptation and the importance of individuals' actions within a system, and how these can largely influence overall system behaviour (Hartvigsen et al., 1998). Assuming homogeneity amongst individuals within a population may lead to misinformed or incorrect assumptions about overall system behaviour and dynamics (Hartvigsen et al., 1998). CAS allows researchers and scientists to understand how system organization is governed and dictated by smaller interactions and processes amongst individual agents and communities (Hartvigsen et al., 1998). Particularly in ecology, understanding the complexity and variability within systems has significant management implications and can assist in conservation efforts in complex global systems with high levels of uncertainty (Hartvigsen et al., 1998).

The adaptive cycle is one way of looking at the processes of CAS over time (Holling, 2001). First created to describe ecological systems, the adaptive cycle model is now used to describe social, ecological, economic, and socioecological systems and the actions that govern them. CAS are governed by three properties: the potential wealth or resources held in the system, the relative degree of controllability or connectedness of system components, and the resilience or vulnerability of the system overall (Holling, 2001, p. 394). Figure 1 graphically represents the first two properties of CAS, potential and connectedness, and their interactions with one another.



**Figure 1. The Adaptive Cycle (Credit - Holling, 2001).** Used to describe systems, the loop begins in the exploitation phase, where the connectedness of system components and the system potential are both low. As the system evolves through the conservation phase, both the interconnectedness and potential increase until a tipping point is reached. The system releases its potential and rapidly moves into the reorganization phase, where potential is high but the system connectedness is low.

The first two phases of the adaptive cycle are sometimes referred to as the front loop, where capital is built and retained as the system becomes increasingly connected as it moves from exploitation (r) to conservation (K) (Holling, 2001). At a certain level of potential and connectedness, the system becomes too rigid to adapt to change or disturbance, and enters a period of collapse where resources and potential are released (Ω). As the system moves into the reorganization phase (α), also known as the back loop of adaptive cycle, the system becomes incredibly unpredictable and uncertain. This is the period of innovation, characterized by system flux and high resilience, coupled with rapid change (Holling, 2001). At this point, the system may reorganize in ways that are similar to how it was before, or it may change in unexpected and monumental ways that effectively create an entirely new system (Holling, 2001). The final property of adaptive cycles, resilience, adds a third dimension. Although not shown on Figure 1,

resilience is highest in the  $\alpha$  and r phases. The  $\alpha$  phase, where both resilience and potential are high, is also the source of the highest potential for innovation (Holling, 2001). In this phase, new experiments and novel ideas are given the space to be explored without causing significant system disturbance since it is already in flux (Holling, 2001). Resilience is also sometimes referred to as the adaptive capacity of the system (Duit & Galaz, 2008). Adaptive capacity consists broadly of exploitation activities (echoed in the r phase of the cycle) and exploration activities (the  $\alpha$  phase in which innovation, learning, and experimentation all take place) (Duit & Galaz, 2008; Holling, 2001).

Complex problems often emerge as a result of systemic structures and processes, but solving these problems tends to take on an individual or piecemeal approach (Westley & Laban, 2012). Tackling problems in this way largely ignores complexity, which can make solutions less effective, and often leads to short-term fixes instead of long term, systematic solutions (Westley & Laban, 2012). One process that is specifically designed to tackle complex problems is social innovation, described in 3.2.4 Social Innovation below.

### **3.2.4 Social Innovation**

*“A social innovation is any initiative (product, process, program, project or platform) that challenges and, over time, contributes to changing the defining routines, resource and authority flows or beliefs of the broader social system in which it is introduced.”*

Westley & Laban, 2012, p. 6

As captured in the above definition, a social innovation is an intervention that changes all aspects of a system in deep and profound ways, as opposed to adapting or modifying isolated system components (Westley & Laban, 2012). Fundamentally, social innovation is based on the idea that intractable problems, often deeply rooted in complexity, can be solved (Westley et al., 2006).

These problems are the result of the increasing complexity in our world, as human and ecological systems become more intertwined and interconnected (Westley et al., 2006). Social innovation is composed of three components: resilience, institutional entrepreneurship, and CAS theory (Westley & Laban, 2012). Resilience is the ability of a system to withstand shocks and disturbances and maintain its original components and function (Westley & Laban, 2012). Resilience is not always a desirable trait of a system. In the context of social innovation, complex problems may be the result of a highly resilient system that is being held in an undesirable system state and requires significant input in order to change (Cote & Nightingale, 2012). More resilient systems may be less likely to successfully undergo social innovation, or may require unique actors or tools that are less apparent (Westley et al., 2006). The literature on social innovation often highlights stories of individuals who are the creators or initial agents for change (Westley & Laban, 2012; Westley et al., 2006). Beyond the individual who sparks the change, equally important are other people who are embedded in the system and know how it works (Westley & Laban, 2012). These system actors hold important knowledge about key system drivers, so they can assist in changing and disrupting the patterns that are holding the system in its undesirable state (Westley & Laban, 2012). Social innovation as a phenomenon is emergent, non-linear, and cross-scalar, so understanding properties of CAS is essential to determining why certain system actors and components spark social innovation while others do not (Patton, 2010; Westley & Laban, 2012). Although some consider central authority as essential to facilitating change, CAS can be spaces for innovation as agents and individuals interact with one another and spark creative solutions to complex problems without the presence of centralized control (Boal & Schultz, 2007). The emergent nature of these interactions makes social innovation difficult to predict or determine from the onset (Westley et al., 2006).

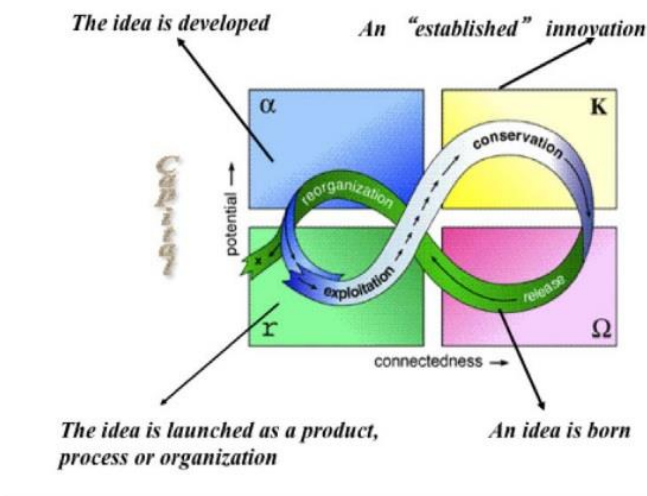
In *The Evolution of Social Innovation*, editors Westley, McGowan, and Tjornbo compiled eight different cases of social innovations throughout history (Westley, McGowan, & Tjornbo, 2017). The collection of social innovations captured in this book range from the creation of National Parks in the United States, to the invention of the Internet, to the development of the Indian Residential School System (Westley et al., 2017). The cases were chosen based on the identification of a particular event that marked a significant transition in the system, and were then looked at historically to hypothesize and determine the events which triggered and led to the fundamental system change (McGowan et al., 2017). Beyond the eight case studies of social innovations, there are three synthesis chapters which describe some key concepts that are found across the various examples. While not found in all cases, these concepts are commonalities which can be applied in understanding and exploring social innovations. One of the most important concepts is cross-scale dynamics, first applied in the description of successful social innovations by using a multi-level perspective framework to map innovations over time (McGowan et al., 2017; Moore, 2017). This framework explores social innovations across three broad scales: landscape, regime, and niche (McGowan et al., 2017). This model uses the three scales in a descriptive capacity as opposed to explanatory, utilizing them to categorize events and actions as particular magnitudes of influence (McGowan et al., 2017). In utilizing this model to describe and track social innovations over time, it was found that “attractors”, elements which exert significant resilience on the system as a whole, at the broadest landscape level exert significant influence on the social innovation (Moore, 2017). Moreover, social innovations are often triggered by an individual or group of individuals (at the niche scale) attempting to change the system from an undesirable state into a more desirable one (Olsson, 2017). This transformative change is actualized when these individuals are able to successfully change

structures, behaviours and policies at the regime and landscape levels of the system (Olsson, 2017). The influence across scales extends in all directions, as events at the niche scale can impact events at the landscape scale and vice versa (Moore, 2017).

There are two other interrelated concepts that are also significant when exploring social innovation: sensitivity to initial conditions, and path dependence (McCarthy, 2017). These concepts both originated from chaos theory, and relate to the system's propensity to develop and become entrenched in reinforcing patterns of thought and behaviour (McCarthy, 2017; Root, 2013). Path dependence refers to the notion that previous actions and activities within the system can influence and dictate future system behaviours (McCarthy, 2017). As well, the initial conditions of the system can exert a significant impact on the development and evolution of the social innovation over time, and small variations in those conditions can lead to significantly different outcomes in overall system behaviour (Root, 2013). The system components and interactions that are in place at the start of a social innovation will largely influence how the innovation shapes itself over time (McCarthy, 2017). By exploring the social innovation over time and examining the context in which the innovation began, a greater understanding of the innovation can be cultivated (McCarthy, 2017).

Social innovations rarely have a clearly defined outcome or goal at its initial conditions (Patton, 2010). More often than not, innovation does not occur in a linear way, but is fraught with critical tipping points, uncertainty, and no clear pathway forward (Patton, 2010). Due to the unpredictability and fluctuating state of the system, desirable outcomes and goals are highly context sensitive and may likely change over time as the system evolves and changes (Patton, 2010). Innovation can also be conceptualized as an adaptive cycle (Figure 2), occurring in the

reorganization phase of the adaptive cycle as resources and capital are released from being tightly held in the system (Holling, 2001).



**Figure 2. The Innovation Cycle (Credit - Westley & Laban, 2012).** The innovation cycle is similar to the adaptive cycle (see Figure 1) except this diagram begins in the release phase, with the introduction of a new idea. As the idea is developed, it gains more potential. It will either fail to properly develop, at which point the cycle stops, or develop into a product, process, or organization. As the innovation develops, it gains more capital and connectedness within the system, until it becomes a fully established innovation.

In this model, the “cycle” begins in the  $\Omega$  phase, where an idea is created as the result of system reorganization and collapse (Westley & Laban, 2012). After the idea is developed ( $\alpha$ ), the idea is converted into an actionable product or process ( $r$ ), and the innovation will stabilize and become a successful part of the system ( $K$ ) (Westley & Laban, 2012). Similar to the adaptive cycle for systems, although the steps are known, this is not a linear or predictable process (Westley & Laban, 2012). The critical transition required to move from one stage of the innovation cycle to another may never occur, and the system may remain stuck and never undergo a social innovation (Westley & Laban, 2012)

Based on various international declarations about Higher Education from the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), social innovation is seen as a vitally important way of educating students in the face of complex problems (Tolosa & Ibarra, 2018). Among other goals, social innovation aims “to re-engage vulnerable populations in mainstream economic, social and cultural institutions. This is not just as recipients of services or ‘transfer entitlements’ but as active participants and contributors to the social innovation process/cycle” (Westley & Laban, 2012, p. 83). Social innovation concepts open up the possibility to explore new opportunities for growth and development within organizations by considering how to change undesirable system components in the face of complexity.

### **3.3 Transformative and Place-Based Learning**

*“Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our way of being in the world”*

O’Sullivan, Morrell, & O’Connor, 2002, p. xvii

First formally defined by Jack Mezirow in the 1970s, transformative learning is an important form of adult and higher education (Baumgartner, 2012; Kasworm & Bowles, 2012). Argued to be “the essence of adult education”, transformative learning involves individuals critically reflecting on their assumptions and frames of reference that make up their knowledge systems and worldviews (Mezirow, 1997, p. 11). Transformative learning often takes place in complex and dynamic contexts, in which many things are unknown and unpredictable (Schugurensky, 2002). In order for transformative learning to occur, there must be a space for discourse that allows participants to listen, empathize, critically reflect, and participate in discussion openly without fear of coercion or antagonism (Mezirow, 1997). Once there is a space that is contextually appropriate for transformative learning, participants must self-reflect and engage in



critical dialogue and discussion (Snyder, 2008). The learning process involves an initial “disorienting dilemma”, in which students begin to question their previously held assumptions and become alienated from them (Baumgartner, 2012; Mezirow, 1978). Students may then unlearn these beliefs and actions, and reframe their perceptions based on their new understanding of reality (Mezirow, 1978; Miller, 2002). Fundamental to transformative learning is the notion that once students move into a perspective shift, they will be unable to return to their old perspective (Mezirow, 1978).

There is not a fixed process for transformative learning to occur, but the outcomes of transformative learning are to change the learner’s frames of reference to be more inclusive, integrative, and self-reflective (Mezirow, 1997; Stuckey, Taylor, & Cranton, 2013). Since there is no single approach to foster transformative learning, it is important to examine the individual context and determine how best to facilitate transformative learning in that particular environment (Taylor & Snyder, 2012). An important component is that transformative learning is *intentional*, and will not naturally occur as the result of age or stage of development unlike other forms of learning (Snyder, 2008).

More contemporary discussions on transformative learning, beginning in the 1990s, include discussions on how race, gender, and other elements of positionality can “privilege and oppress individuals”, something that Mezirow’s initial research largely ignored or did not take into account (Baumgartner, 2012, p. 106). Despite the critiques of Mezirow’s initial theory, including that the importance of context in the transformative learning process was largely ignored (Baumgartner, 2012), his theory has set the stage for modern critical interpretations of transformative learning, described in more detail below.

In modern contexts, an underlying premise to transformative learning is that the current paradigm of modernity upon which Western society is based is causing human and environmental degradation on a global scale (Compton, 2002; O’Sullivan, 2002). Changing the paradigm of modernity requires returning to a sense of place and belonging in community, as well as recognizing the interconnectedness of the human and natural worlds (Clover, 2002; Compton, 2002; Lipsett, 2002; O’Sullivan, 2002). Enacting this change requires challenging and breaking down the dominant cultural and educational narratives, resulting in either system reformation or radical restructuring and overall transformation (O’Sullivan, 2002). Challenging this paradigm also requires critical reflection of other forms of knowledge, and should not over-romanticize different discourses that run counter to modernity (Dei, 2002). Transformative learning is both an individual and collective process, in which “critical reflection and social action” both take place simultaneously as individuals transform their consciousness and behaviours, eventually contributing to a larger social transformation (Schugurensky, 2002, p. 63). Transformative learning which seeks to break down modernity should provide a basis to change the stories and narratives we tell about our world and elucidate our destructive patterns of behaviour (O’Sullivan, 2002).

Learning can occur in many domains, including: spiritual, mental, emotional, physical, and aesthetic (Miller, 2002; Shilling, 2002). Several scholars emphasize the importance of spirituality within the practice of transformative learning (Dei, 2002; Miller, 2002). Developing a spiritual element to learning requires grounding the educational experience in culture and place, in order to connect learners to the collective (Clover, 2002; Dei, 2002). Grounding learning in place requires paying attention to the context of the program, particularly when transformative learning is a program goal (Snyder, 2008). A focus on context in program design helps students ground

their learning in place and fosters a deeper connection to the content being taught (Dei, 2002). As well, a connection to place can cultivate a sense of interconnectedness with the natural world, which in itself can be a transformative experience (Lipsett, 2002).

Context is particularly salient in many Indigenous ways of knowing, so students should understand how and where knowledge is being created in order to cultivate a deeper appreciation for that knowledge (Dei, 2002). As well, the context and environment needs to be conducive to both critical reflection *and* social action, or it risks creating skepticism and cynicism amongst learners (Schugurensky, 2002). Since transformative learning requires students to explore their worldview and positionality and to challenge these assumptions, it is often a deeply personal and vulnerable process (Castleden et al., 2013). There must be safe spaces for students to explore their assumptions and worldviews in order for this learning and unlearning to take place (Castleden et al., 2013).

Not only is a supportive learning environment necessary for transformative learning, but learners must also have relationships that encourage this process (Schugurensky, 2002). Often in transformative learning, learners may encounter a “growing edge” in which their underlying pedagogy and worldview has been challenged but they have yet to undergo a full perspective shift (Berger, 2004; Snyder, 2008). During this experience, teachers need to assist students through this perspective shift and help them work through the turbulence that may accompany it (Berger, 2004). Within transformative learning, who is teaching the material is equally important as what materials are being taught so that knowledge is shared in respectful and appropriate ways (Dei, 2002). Having teachers who can also act as facilitators and collaborators can foster meaningful relationships with students, and allow for reciprocal learning (Castleden et al., 2013; Mezirow, 1997). Since learning is intimately tied to identity, every learner will have their own

unique lived experience that shapes how they learn (Dei, 2002). Therefore it is not effective to excessively categorize learners without acknowledging difference and diversity (Dei, 2002). However, this must be balanced with recognizing interconnectedness amongst people and places as a way to return to a less fragmented understanding of the world (Dei, 2002). Both inclusion and difference are important components in successful transformative learning processes (O’Sullivan, 2002).

Beyond spirituality, transformative learning in an Indigenous context also includes elements of decolonization and healing (Shilling, 2002). Indigenous people in Canada have been working under and learning in foreign education systems for over 100 years as a result of colonization (described in more detail in Chapter 2), which has caused significant historical and intergenerational trauma (Shilling, 2002). Transformative learning offers the opportunity for individuals to heal from this trauma by reclaiming language, culture, and identity as tools to challenge Western ways of knowing and to reconstruct the “knowledge base with traditional thought processes and ways of thinking” (Shilling, 2002, p. 156). As well, transformative learning that includes Indigenous knowledge can disrupt and reduce “the continued reproduction of colonial and recolonial relations” in academia by changing the types of knowledge used in conventional education (Dei, 2002, p. 121).

Evaluating and measuring transformative learning experiences is predominantly through qualitative methods, most often using retrospective interviews (Snyder, 2008; Stuckey et al., 2013). However, Stuckey and others (2013) have generated a survey to quantitatively report how transformative learning is taking place and the extent to which it occurs. This survey has been pilot tested among a group of professionals, but the authors recommend using the survey with a group of “participants who have recently shared a similar transformative event” (Stuckey et al.,

2013, p. 225). Kasworm and Bowles (2012) conducted a meta-analysis of ~250 reports on transformative learning, and began to compile a framework of transformative learning in higher education. This emerging framework is presented below in Figure 3.

**Table 24.2 Emerging Transformative Learning Framework in Higher Education**

<i>Assumptions</i>	<i>Contextual Levers of Change</i>	<i>Exemplary Strategies</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
Commitment of transformative learning in the core mission of institutions and programs	Teaching and learning settings (face-to-face and online)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Action research</li> <li>– Collaborative inquiry</li> <li>– Critical thinking and reflection</li> </ul>	Intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual growth of learners
Alignment of organizational practices to support transformative learning	Programs and departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Cultural immersion experiences</li> </ul>	Enhanced reflective, analytical, and critical discourses
Supporting the whole learning and development of learners	Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Digital stories or videos</li> </ul>	Development of transformative learning communities
Fostering a climate of social justice, empowerment, and intercultural awareness for all	Sociocultural external events and environmental conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Experiential and active learning</li> <li>– Narrative, embodied, and somatic learning</li> </ul>	Improved and increased retention rates
Investing resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Portfolio development and assessment</li> <li>– Transformative curriculum goals and outcomes</li> <li>– Developing a shared democratic and inclusive culture</li> <li>– Internship programs</li> <li>– Paired or clustered courses</li> <li>– Peer, cohort, dialogue, and/or support groups</li> <li>– Scholarly communities of practice</li> <li>– Community partnerships</li> <li>– Service-learning programs</li> <li>– Study abroad programs</li> <li>– Academic and social support programs</li> <li>– Faculty professional development opportunities</li> </ul>	Societal change

**Figure 3. Transformative Learning Framework (Credit – Kasworm and Bowles, 2012).** This framework identifies emerging principles of transformative learning based on a meta-analysis of reports of transformative learning in higher education. This framework identifies key assumptions, levers of change, strategies, and outcomes that appear to be consistent with transformative learning processes.

This framework, although not fully “completed”, does highlight some of the potential strategies and outcomes of transformative learning experiences. Strategies to foster transformative learning include getting out of traditional four-walled classrooms and out into communities and the natural environment, building strong partnerships amongst students and teachers, and encouraging critical reflection (Kasworm & Bowles, 2012). The outcomes of transformative learning are also diverse, and range from individual benefits of personal growth, to larger benefits of societal change (Kasworm & Bowles, 2012).

Experiential learning is an intentional approach for fostering transformative learning experiences in students, and often includes students interacting in new and unfamiliar contexts that may be cross-cultural or intercultural in nature (Kasworm & Bowles, 2012). Having students live in and interact with local communities provides opportunities to be exposed to different worldviews that may not be as apparent in the classroom setting (Castleden et al., 2013).

Another important pedagogical model often found in experiential learning is place-based education (Bell, 2003). Sometimes referred to environmental education, land education, or outdoor education, place-based education embeds learning in communities and incorporates hands-on learning in nature into the pedagogical process (Calderon, 2014; McKeon, 2012). The dominant narrative in Western education of people being separate from the land is harmful and feeds into colonial perceptions of human-environment relations (Donald, 2009; Scully, 2012). Place-based education brings students back out onto the land, and in doing so can cultivate appreciation and connection with their communities and nature (Bishop, 2004; Sobel, 2004). Place-based education can adapt and change to fit the particular context it is applied within, and there is no single model for how to implement this educational approach (Smith, 2002). Some scholars criticize the use of place-based as the terminology, and choose to use “land-based”,

believing that this distinction places land as the underlying factor that influences people as opposed to operating under the ontology that human beings dictate space and place (Bang et al., 2014). The general theory around place-based education, however, does not adequately include Indigenous voices and colonial histories around the occupation and marginalization of place (Calderon, 2014). Place-based education can, however, be indigenized in order to be an appropriate pedagogical tool to be used in Indigenous spaces and with Indigenous ways of knowing (McKeon, 2012). Scully (2012) reported that students appeared to receive the strongest and longest lasting impacts from experiential education opportunities on the land or with guest Indigenous speakers.

Both place- and land-based learning can become components of Indigenous education, so long as they are adequately decolonized and shift the relationship of humans to land and the environment to more accurately reflect Indigenous worldviews (Cajete, 1994; McKeon, 2012). Land as a relative, as opposed to a material object, comes up in the literature on Indigenous pedagogy as a central education component (Bang et al., 2014). Even though land-based education is a Western pedagogical construct, many Indigenous cultures embody a place-based philosophy and epistemology (Donald, 2009). Place-based education can provide an enhanced cross-cultural understanding for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students alike, as it is a central piece in Indigenous pedagogy (Donald, 2009; Scully, 2012). Place-based education can be indigenized and turned into a useful pedagogical tool in cross-cultural contexts (McKeon, 2012). The underlying concepts of place-based education from an Indigenous perspective are described below.

### 3.4 Critical Indigenous Literature

#### 3.4.1 Indigenous Research Methodologies

*“Gaining control of the research process has been pivotal for Indigenous peoples in decolonization”*

Kovach, 2005, p. 23

As described in Chapter 2, there is a lengthy history of research being conducted on Indigenous people. These approaches, which marginalized Indigenous communities and provided little to no benefits in return, are no longer acceptable in today’s research climate (Drawson et al., 2017). The marginalization and oppression of Indigenous knowledge has led scholars to desire new ways of conducting research that represents community diversity and dismantles the power structures inherent in many conventional research practices (Mertens, 2015). There are now several ethical guidelines created for and by Indigenous communities for conducting research with Indigenous people and communities, including the Tri-Council funding agencies (Canadian Institutes of Health Research [CIHR], Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada [NSERC], & Social Sciences, and Humanities Research Council of Canada [SSHRC]) policy statement, and the research standards for Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) (Drawson et al., 2017; First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2014). OCAP was first conceptualized in 1998 by the National Steering Committee of the First Nations and Inuit Regional Longitudinal Health Survey, now the First Nations Information Governance Center (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2014). The OCAP principles are broad, and refer more to broad values that are central to Indigenous epistemologies around self-determination and collective rights (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2014). Ownership refers to the community’s relationship to knowledge and information, control asserts how that information is



collected and used is at the community's discretion, access refers to the community's ability to manage and obtain that knowledge, and possession broadly refers to the stewardship of knowledge (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2014). Another popular ethical framework is the four R's: relevance, respect, reciprocity, and responsibility (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). The four R's are regarded as principles for empowerment in higher education for Indigenous people, and are also important in guiding research that is respectful to Indigenous peoples (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Wilson, 2003). Using the four R's in practice helps return benefits to communities, challenges conventional research practice, and helps strengthen ethical practices in Indigenous research (Castleden et al., 2012; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991)

As these ethical guidelines continue to gain traction, there is an increasing amount of research claiming to use Indigenous research methodologies (Drawson et al., 2017). While there is no single definition of what constitutes an Indigenous research methodology (Drawson et al., 2017; Koster et al., 2012), they can be broadly referred to as emancipatory methodologies because they seek to purposely deviate from the dominant scientific paradigm (Easby, 2016; Kovach, 2005). Indigenous methodologies do not easily fit into the methodological categories of Western research (Kovach, 2005). Indigenous methodologies are shaped and influenced by Indigenous epistemologies and theories, decolonizing methods, and broad ethical protocols (Kovach, 2005). Indigenous research methodologies tend to all follow the same broad principles, including acknowledging that there are ways of thinking outside the dominant Western research paradigm, and ensuring research is ethical and incorporates Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing (Koster et al., 2012). Wherever possible, research with Indigenous communities should be participatory, seeking a "reciprocal appreciation" of knowledge sharing amongst all participants (Johnston, 2013, p. 27). There are several methods commonly used in Indigenous research,

including storytelling, culture-specific methods, and community-based participatory research (CBPR) (Drawson et al., 2017). Since no two Indigenous communities have identical epistemologies or experiences related to research, obtaining culture-specific information about ethical research practices will improve the value of the research process and results (Stanton, 2014).

Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is a research framework that is commonly used in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous research circles when working with communities (Castleden et al., 2012; Drawson et al., 2017; Easby, 2016; Koster et al., 2012; Leeuw et al., 2012; Stanton, 2014). Used as an emancipatory tool in marginalized and disempowered circles, CBPR should fundamentally recognize that the researcher and the community are fully involved and participate throughout the entire research process in ways that are mutually beneficial (BeLue et al., 2012; Castleden et al., 2012; Raymaker, 2016). In an Indigenous context, CBPR should endeavor to be as community-driven as possible, and the relationships developed should extend beyond the “final outcomes” of the research project itself (Lavallee, 2009). CBPR is the methodology that has guided this research project, and its uses, strengths, and limitations are discussed in more detail in the Methodology and Methods, and Results and Analysis chapters of this thesis.

### 3.4.2 Mainstream Approaches to Indigenous Education

*“The current education system perpetuates a lack of acknowledgement of Aboriginal history and of the current realities of Aboriginal peoples in Canada while continuing to exclude and marginalize Aboriginal learners”*

Scully, 2012, p. 150

There are many barriers for Indigenous people obtaining education in Canada, including curricula containing little to no cultural information about Indigenous cultures, and the legacy of the Indian Residential School (IRS) system creating distrust in the education system (Axworthy, DeRiviere, & Moore Rattray, 2016). Historically, classroom education about Indigenous people downplayed the history and ignored the contemporary reality, making these unproductive and often unsafe places for Indigenous people to learn (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015c).

Many Indigenous people have argued that Western knowledge systems do not account for or accommodate Indigenous epistemologies (Leeuw et al., 2012), and as a result there are ongoing challenges with how to include Indigenous knowledge in Western and non-Indigenous educational institutions (Ahenakew, 2017). The majority of Western academic institutions are dominated by the colonial mentality, which often means there are few opportunities and spaces to bring in Indigenous knowledge, experts, and knowledge holders (Castleden et al., 2013).

Furthermore, when Indigenous knowledge is brought in to classrooms it is often used in tokenistic ways, in which the knowledge is reduced or appropriated to fit and assimilate into the dominant Western paradigm (Castleden et al., 2013). One issue in contemporary Canadian contexts is that Indigenous knowledge is often introduced into the school curriculum as one unit within social studies and related classes (Butler, Ng-A-Fook, Vaudrin-Charette, & McFadden, 2015). Focusing only on integrating Indigenous content into education, as opposed to changing

the pedagogical underpinnings of education, places other cultures and knowledge systems in positions that make them less than or subjugate to the “mainstream”, largely Eurocentric knowledge base (Tuck & Gatzambide-Fernandez, 2013). Additionally, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators struggle with how to bring Indigenous knowledges into classroom settings, since some translation always needs to take place (Andreotti, Ahenakew, & Cooper, 2011). Educators attempting to introduce Indigenous knowledge must find the balance between having Indigenous knowledge perceived as “normal” and similar enough to the dominant way of knowing to be understood, but also distinct enough that it is valuable and provides additional insight to the dominant knowledge system (Andreotti et al., 2011)

### **3.4.3 Indigenous Pedagogy – An Alternative Education Approach**

*“Critically teaching as decolonization must not simply...challenge imperial, colonial, and oppressive knowledges but also subvert the hegemonizing of particular cultural, symbolic, and political practices and significations”*

Dei, 2002, p. 130

Indigenous pedagogy is largely guided by Indigenous epistemologies and ways of knowing. Indigenous ways of knowing are rooted in relationships, and are formed on the basis of mutual respect and interconnectedness (Kovach, 2005; Lavallee, 2009). Indigenous knowledge is holistic, and includes physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual ways of knowing (Hatcher et al., 2009; McNally, 2004). Indigenous knowledge is intimately tied to the land and is not held by individuals, but by the collective (Ahenakew, 2017; Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2012; Little Bear, 2000). The importance of community and the collective is central to discussions on Indigenous research methods, Indigenous pedagogy, and Indigenous evaluation (LaFrance & Nichols, 2008; Little Bear, 2000). These ways of knowing are collective, with an emphasis on reciprocity and accountability towards others (Kovach, 2005). Indigenous epistemologies are

also fluid and non-linear, and as a result often clashes with Western research and pedagogy (Kovach, 2005). An important note is that Indigenous epistemologies vary between and within nations, so there is no single definition that will encompass an “Indigenous epistemology” since no over-arching one exists (Lavallee, 2009).

While Indigenous epistemologies are now being documented and understood in academia, there is still the challenge of how to bring Indigenous ways of knowing into mainstream knowledge spaces that previously marginalized or discredited Indigenous knowledge (Ahenakew, 2017). This challenge is largely due to the epistemic divide between Western and Indigenous sciences and ways of knowing, particularly in how knowledge is perceived and understood in these paradigms (Hatcher et al., 2009). The way knowledge is constructed and produced has significant implications for what that knowledge represents and how it can be used (Leeuw et al., 2012).

In Western knowledge systems, knowledge is independent and singular, and is viewed as an object that is free to use by anyone who acquires it (Hatcher et al., 2009). Western knowledge is also predicated on objectivity, and revolves around the notion that humans are separate from nature (Koster et al., 2012). Conversely, Indigenous knowledge is viewed as a verb, constructed between people and intimately tied to nature (Hatcher et al., 2009; Koster et al., 2012).

Indigenous pedagogy focuses on the idea that the land is the first teacher, and many important teachings are closely tied to the land (Ahenakew, 2016; Bang et al., 2014; Cajete, 2015). This intimate relationship to the land, which focuses on relational accountability to human and non-human beings, cannot easily be translated into Western education settings (Ahenakew, 2017; Bang et al., 2014; Koster et al., 2012). Some scholars have argued that education is not Indigenous unless it is tied to and based off of the land (Simpson, 2014). Cultural knowledge is

both relational and situational (McNally, 2004). In Indigenous contexts, knowledge is typically created, gathered, and held collectively between people based on interactions with the rest of creation, and receiving cultural knowledge comes with responsibilities for both teachers and students (Kovach, 2005; McNally, 2004). Elders are the key holders of Indigenous knowledge, and they carry teachings, ceremonies and stories that are integral to Indigenous ways of knowing (Axworthy et al., 2016; Lavallee, 2009). Due to the crucial role Elders play in many Indigenous communities, seeking guidance and direction from Elders wherever possible is important in creating appropriate educational programs and curricula (Bartlett et al., 2012).

One approach to bridging the epistemological divide between Indigenous and Western ways of knowing is through Two-Eyed Seeing. Two-Eyed Seeing involves “learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing and from the other eye with the strengths of Western ways of knowing and to using both of these eyes together” (Hatcher et al., 2009, p. 146). Two-Eyed Seeing overlaps multiple knowledge systems to create a deeper understanding of the world than any one system holds (Iwama et al., 2009). Rather than “merging” knowledge systems together, or using components from Indigenous knowledge within a Western epistemology, Two-Eyed Seeing brings together multiple knowledge systems to solve problems that Western knowledge on its own may not be capable of solving (Iwama et al., 2009).

Paramount to the success of Two-Eyed Seeing is epistemological pluralism, or allowing multiple knowledge systems to be appreciated and respected at the same time without holding them as diametrically opposing one another (Andreotti et al., 2011). The biggest challenge in an education context is not asking students an "either-or" situation about which knowledge system makes the most sense for a given context or problem, but providing students with the tools to learn how to hold multiple perspectives in tension (Andreotti et al., 2011).

Another way to bridge the divide between Western and Indigenous ways of knowing is to reintroduce the idea of place into Western thought (Johnson & Murton, 2007). Western epistemology is largely place-less, removing context whenever possible in an attempt to be a “universal” way of knowing (Johnson & Murton, 2007). Removing context and place from human beings continues to impose colonial concepts such as individuality, which is counter to Indigenous epistemologies emphasizing holism, leaving little to no room for Indigenous ways of knowing in education or other contexts (Butler et al., 2015; Smith, 1999). This disconnect with place may also create what Robin Kimmerer describes in her novel “Braiding Sweetgrass” as species loneliness, a “deep, unnamed sadness” that stems from a lack of connection with the rest of creation (2013, p. 209).

One of the important components to successful holistic education is to create culturally safe spaces for learning, similar to what is required for transformative learning experiences (Castleden et al., 2013; Hatcher et al., 2009). This includes many components, such as: using celebrations and rituals to tie students to their learning environment, and to encourage spaces for students to speak freely and openly without fear or judgment (Hatcher et al., 2009). Learning circles create a different environment to the traditional classroom setting, and relate to the spiritual significance of the circle in the world (Hatcher et al., 2009). Another pedagogical tool that aligns with Indigenous ways of knowing is service learning (McNally, 2004). Since knowledge is tied so closely to experience, service learning grounds all learning in experience by providing students the opportunity to learn in ways outside of the four walls of a classroom (McNally, 2004). As well, it aligns knowledge with responsibility, and can promote students to advocate for Indigenous issues (McNally, 2004).

### 3.4.4 Historical Trauma and Healing

*“Healing is a process, not an event”*

Waldram, 2014, p. 8

Intergenerational trauma is the result of decades of colonization, manifested through forced relocation, residential schools, religious conversion, the Sixties scoop, and the foster care system (Kirmayer, Gone, & Moses, 2014). Combined, these deeply traumatic events disrupt family structure, traditional values, and often limit or prevent the spread of cultural values (Kirmayer et al., 2014; Robbins & Dewar, 2011). Since many aspects of colonization actively take place today, the act of healing will not be one single action but often a lifetime or many lifetimes of working through and processing trauma so that it is no longer actively harmful.

All people living in Canada have been affected by colonization in some way, shape, or form. Settler or non-Indigenous Canadians have benefited from broken treaty promises and continue to do so as long as Canada does not honour those initial treaties. Indigenous people have been harmed by colonization in a multitude of ways. The process of “decolonizing” cannot just be undertaken by Indigenous people, or the government, working in isolation. Since all people living in Canada are affected by the legacy of colonialism, then decolonization needs to be an effort shared by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (Donald, 2009)

The concept of healing can be echoed in the ways research and evaluation are structured and described. While traditional evaluation may focus on the deficits or areas for improvement, evaluation in Indigenous communities should focus on strengths (Chouinard & Cousins, 2007). Moving away from weaknesses can provide a source of healing for individual self-worth and can work to changing the broader narratives and stereotypes that are prevalent in the dominant discourse related to perceptions of Indigenous people (Chouinard & Cousins, 2007).



### 3.4.5 Reconciliation

*“Reconciliation is not an Aboriginal problem; it is a Canadian one”*

Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015a, p. VI

One way in which the Canadian government has attempted to recognize Indigenous rights was through the patriation of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. In 1982, at the same time that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was enshrined, Aboriginal and Treaty rights became constitutionally protected under Section 35(1) (Saskamoose et al., 2017). The implications and legal ramifications continue to be defined in the Canadian court system, as more Indigenous communities define what constitutes Aboriginal and Treaty rights under this constitutional protection.

Despite the challenges and complexities related to Indigenous issues in Canada, there are several initiatives that have the potential to restore and renew Indigenous sovereignty in Canada. The most promising of these is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), first created in 2008 as the result of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015a). The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement was the result of a decades-long process of former IRS students advocating for all Canadians to understand the abuse they endured at the schools and the impact the experience has had on them and their families (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015c). Part of the agreement was compensation for the damages, injuries and abuse experienced by former students, as well as the establishment of the TRC to educate Canadians and “guide a process of reconciliation” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015c, p. 99).

The TRC travelled across the country over six years, speaking to over 6000 former students of the IRS system and listening to their stories and experiences (Truth and Reconciliation

Commission, 2015a). As the result of this work, the TRC produced a list of 94 Calls to Action that seek to “redress the legacy of residential schools” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015b, p. 1). The Calls to Action address a variety of issues, including child welfare, education, justice, health, language and culture, all relating to the issues of acknowledging the legacy of colonization and working towards reconciliation (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015b). As part of this work, the TRC defined reconciliation to be “an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships” amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015a, p. 16). Reconciliation is not a final destination, but an ongoing and evolving journey that seeks to repair and renew broken and imbalanced relationships.

Initiatives to respect and acknowledge the unique rights and experiences of Indigenous people are also taking place on an international level. The most notable international effort to acknowledge Indigenous people is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), adopted by the General Assembly in 2007 (United Nations, 2007). UNDRIP is a set of 46 articles, recognizing that Indigenous peoples around the world have unique rights, including self-determination, protection from discrimination and assimilation, language protection, and distinct lands and territories (United Nations, 2007). The TRC explicitly mentions the importance of UNDRIP in their Principles of Reconciliation, stating that UNDRIP “is the framework for reconciliation at all levels and across all sectors of Canadian society” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015c). Canada was initially an objector to UNDRIP, but the government changed their status to a supporter and adopted UNDRIP on May 10, 2016 (Fontaine, 2016). Most recently, the Government of British Columbia became the first province to implement UNDRIP in November 2019 (Government of British Columbia, 2019). Citing the

TRC's claim that UNDRIP should be used as the framework for reconciliation, the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* outlines the first steps in implementing UNDRIP in the province (Government of British Columbia, 2019). This process will include applying the principles from UNDRIP into provincial legislation to ensure all laws align with UNDRIP, and supporting the development and continuation of Indigenous governing bodies (4th Session 41st Parliament British Columbia, 2019). The step made by British Columbia indicates that there is interest in implementing UNDRIP in meaningful and legally enforceable ways in Canada, and this momentum will hopefully continue into the future.

As well, the TRC was predated by another commission that sought to analyze and understand Indigenous issues in Canada, the Royal Proclamation on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). The RCAP was established on August 26, 1991, following events such as the Oka Crisis, and the Meech Lake Accord which had created significant tension between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada (Dussault et al., 1996). The RCAP addressed the institutional structures that continue to affect Indigenous people, as well as the "colonial attitudes of cultural superiority" that directly and negatively impact Indigenous people (Dussault et al., 1996, p. 15). The RCAP laid the foundations for much of the work undertaken by the TRC, set the precedent for the inquiry into the IRS system, as well as instigated many of the initiatives currently underway in Canada, including museum repatriation and a push for self-determination as a constitutional obligation (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015a).

There are some criticisms with the use of the word reconciliation in the Canadian context. Some have argued that reconciliation disconnects society from many of the injustices Indigenous people have faced by placing them in a historical context and ignoring the contemporary aspects of colonization (Corntassel, 2012). Others have argued that reconciliation is not the correct word

because it implies that the relationship between Indigenous people and the Canadian state were once harmonious, despite the fact that this was likely not the status quo at any given point (Garneau, 2012; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015a). Furthermore, there are still significant barriers to reconciliation, one of the most significant being the deteriorating relationship between the federal government and Indigenous people (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015a). Despite the frequent use of the word, some people such as Glenn Hudson, the chief of Peguis First Nation, have stated that “reconciliation is only words” and that governments are not actively practicing reconciliation (Annable, 2018). Moving forward with reconciliation in Canada requires an understanding that not only does reconciliation mean something different to everyone, but also that it is an ongoing process that does not just occur discretely in time and space (Laucius, 2017).

### **3.5 Evaluation Practice**

Evaluation can be broadly defined as “the systematic study of merit, worth, and significance” (Scriven, 2016, p. 27). Evaluation is a process that renders judgment about a particular program, to assist in both decision making and knowledge generation (Chouinard & Cousins, 2009). Some scholars such as Michael Quinn Patton describe evaluation as a pedagogical tool, with its underlying goals being teaching and learning (2010, 2018). Although the practice of evaluation has existed for hundreds of years, evaluation as a formal profession can be traced back to the 1960s (Mertens, 2015). Evaluation is both a discipline in itself and an analytical tool. Based on the Joint Committee on Standards (2010) for evaluation, any type of evaluation must be: useful, feasible, ethical, accurate, and accountable (Patton, 2018, p. 179).

### **3.5.1 Traditional Program Evaluation**

Traditional program evaluation is guided by a postpositivist research paradigm, focusing on methodological rigour and replicability (Mertens, 2015). Traditional evaluation follows a formative and summative approach, in which a program is assessed on its suitability to be a model, and is judged on its merit, worth and value (Gamble, 2008; Patton, 1994). Summative evaluation is used to judge the merit and worth of a program, structured around goal attainment and outcome measurement (Patton, 1994). Formative evaluation, often viewed as a precursor to or preliminary step for summative evaluation, is an approach which seeks to improve programs by examining the strengths and weaknesses that contribute to particular processes and outcomes (Patton, 1994). Traditional evaluation attempts to manage complexity and uncertainty and impose some amount of order on a particular program, project, or system in order to make the evaluation process more straightforward (Patton, 2010). These evaluations are either exclusively driven by top-down, theory driven approaches, or by bottom-up participatory methods (Patton, 2010, p. 24).

Regardless of the type of evaluation taking place, accountability is vitally important. Traditional evaluation typically relies on external sources to determine accountability, often in the form of financial and resource allocation (Patton, 2010). The evaluator must also be credible in the eyes of external organizations in order for the evaluation to be successful. This often requires a certain level of independence from the group or project under evaluation, since this type of evaluation seeks to be as objective and methods-focused as possible (Patton, 2010).

The challenge most evaluators face, regardless of the type of evaluation, is clarifying goals and outcomes so that they are SMART (Smart, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely). The SMART framework is a type of evaluability assessment that takes place prior to evaluation,

because clearly articulated goals are needed in order for evaluation to meaningfully take place (Patton, 2018, p. 35). In traditional evaluation, the SMART framework is the most common tool for measuring program outcomes and goal attainment (Patton, 2010). These goals and outcomes are predetermined prior to the evaluation, and are used as the metrics of performance and success of a program (Patton, 2010).

While the traditional method of evaluation is useful in many situations, it is not always the most effective approach (Patton, 2010). Evaluation in its traditional sense “has become a major barrier to social innovation” because it follows a specific format to provide accountability to the funding or governing body (Westley et al., 2006, p. 51). Often, innovations and experimental programs need to evolve over time and do not immediately lend themselves to formative and summative evaluation (Westley et al., 2006). Additionally, traditional evaluation views program context as an unnecessary factor that can be ignored or otherwise managed (Fagen et al., 2011). This approach does not work in complex situations filled with change and uncertainty, since the context is vitally important to understanding the particular development or innovation under evaluation (Fagen et al., 2011). As well, since transformative learning experiences are ongoing journeys with no clear “end” point, they are often incompatible with traditional program evaluation (Castleden et al., 2013). Traditional evaluation may not work well in Indigenous contexts either. Similar to the Western notion of research, “evaluation” has received negative connotations in many Indigenous communities (Johnston, 2013). Historically, evaluation conducted by governmental organizations was often done with little to no perceived community benefits, where information was withheld from the community and collected by and outsider (Johnston, 2013). There are clearly issues with traditional evaluation practices, from both the social innovation literature and from the experience of Indigenous communities. Alternative

evaluation methods offer a solution to foster evaluation and provide benefits to Indigenous communities. These methods include utilization-focused evaluation, developmental evaluation, principles-focused evaluation, and Indigenous approaches to evaluation, all described in more detail below.

### **3.5.2 Utilization-Focused Evaluation**

*“There is no one best way to conduct an evaluation...The design of a particular evaluation depends on the people involved and their situation”*

Patton, 2010, p. 15

One overarching evaluation framework that expands evaluation beyond the traditional approach is utilization-focused evaluation (U-FE). Based on the pragmatic paradigm which focuses on use, U-FE posits that evaluation should ultimately be based on its intended use for specific intended users (Mertens, 2015; Patton, 2018; Ramírez & Brodhead, 2013). Fundamental to U-FE is that evaluation is an inherently value-laden process (Patton, 2015). Rather than ignoring the value component, U-FE determines which values frame the evaluation by working with intended users of its results (Patton, 2015). U-FE can have any purpose, data, design, or focus (Patton, 2010). U-FE is not focused on any method or theory in particular, but is more of a process for creating a useful evaluation (Patton, 2010). The intent with U-FE is to move away from generic evaluation and towards specific, tangible processes that will satisfy the intended use for the intended users (Patton, 2010). Unlike traditional program evaluation which may be done externally using a generic protocol, U-FE requires the evaluator to build a relationship with the users to determine what type of evaluation will be have the most utility (Patton, 2010). In practice, this must also be balanced with the “accuracy, feasibility, and propriety” and other principles and standards of evaluation (Patton, 2010). U-FE is a decision making process on how to undertake evaluation

through collaborative discussions amongst evaluators, stakeholders, and users, based on personal and situational experience, to develop the most beneficial evaluation approach for the particular context (Patton, 2015).

### **3.5.3 Developmental Evaluation**

*“Developmental evaluation is designed to be congruent with and to nurture developmental, emergent, innovative, and transformative processes.”*

Patton, 2010, p. 7

Developmental evaluation (DE) is one approach based on U-FE, with the intended use being the support of innovation and adaptive development (Patton, 2018). Informed by the transformative paradigm, DE seeks to include participants in the research process who may not otherwise be included or considered by traditional evaluation approaches (Mertens, 2015; Patton, 2010). Since social innovations occur in complex, dynamic systems, any evaluation must be able to navigate and adapt to this complexity in order to be useful and successful (Patton, 2010). As well, the fact that many social innovations do not have specific, measurable outcomes at the beginning means that traditional evaluation approaches will either fall flat or stifle innovation by imposing order where there is none (Patton, 2010). Because of this, DE is considered to be a complexity-based evaluation approach, with the goal to learn in order to “inform action that makes a difference” (Hargreaves & Podems, 2012; Patton, 2010, p. 11).

With periodic and regular reflection throughout all stages of a program, DE is used best in situations of high complexity, or in the early stages of social innovation (Gamble, 2008; Patton, 2010; Westley et al., 2006). DE can be used to evaluate projects and programs in an ongoing way as they evolve, both in their trajectory and their goals (Gamble, 2008; Patton, 2010). Since DE is used in complex systems, it is important to understand how the six concepts of complexity



(nonlinearity, adaptation, emergence, coevolution, dynamical systems change, and uncertainty) should be considered in the evaluation process. As an evaluation method, DE does not try to impose order or certainty in process or outcomes (Patton, 2010). Additionally, DE does not advocate for or rely on any particular evaluation method or tool (Patton, 2010). The ultimate purpose of DE is to have emergent and flexible methods and design so that the evaluation can adapt as the innovation changes over time (Patton, 2010). This adaptation is necessary since DE is used in complex systems, which are inherently adaptive themselves, and have many uncertain and unknowable processes (Patton, 2010). This uncertainty is the result of dynamical system processes, which affect the system in unknowable and unpredictable ways (Patton, 2010). To reduce uncertainty, having more rapid evaluation feedback ensures that information is available as soon as possible to react and adapt to the emergent properties of the problem (Patton, 2010).

Since context is so fundamentally important in any social innovation, the “situational sensitivity” that is central to DE makes it a pragmatic evaluation approach (Patton, 2010, p. 7). Furthermore, unlike traditional evaluations which follow a top-down or bottom-up creation, DE works best in situations where all actors and forces come together and interact with one another in complex environments (Patton, 2010).

There are broadly five purposes and uses of DE, including: evaluating a new innovation and ongoing development, adapting existing principles to a new context, creating new initiatives with rapid feedback, creating a model for early innovation, and for evaluating major systems change and scaling innovations (Patton, 2010).

Since what works well in one situation or program is not indicative of success in another, DE must be cognizant of program context (Patton, 2010). Additionally, what works at one stage of a

development or innovation may not work later on (Patton, 2010). Failure to recognize context and the role it plays in organizational success can run the risk of the system falling into a rigidity trap (Patton, 2010). To combat this, DE should always be based on what makes sense at the given time and place of evaluation (Patton, 2010). Since DE occurs in complex scenarios and environments, flexibility and adaptability need to be built into and integrated into the design of the evaluation (Patton, 2010).

The largest difference of DE compared to traditional program evaluation is the role the evaluator plays. In DE, the evaluator is not intended to be an impartial observer, but is an integral part of facilitating discussion and fostering innovation and adaptation in the face of uncertainty (Poth, Pinto, & Howery, 2012; Rey, Tremblay, & Brousselle, 2014). Additionally, the presence of an evaluator will inherently change the evaluation process (Cousins, Whitmore, & Shulha, 2013; Patton, 2010). Any evaluator working in new or unfamiliar contexts should understand that their presence has an impact on the situation, which will make them better informed to understand the context they are working in (Cousins et al., 2013). Despite the potential challenges that arise when the evaluator embeds themselves in the evaluation process, this is an essential component for DE which seeks to be more participatory and inclusive than traditional program evaluation (Patton, 2010). The act of participating in an evaluation may have significant implications for an organization, as employees and stakeholders begin to “think evaluatively” (Patton, 2010, p. 145).

### 3.5.4 Principles-Focused Evaluation

*“A good principle provides guidance for making choices and decisions, is useful in setting priorities, inspires, and supports ongoing development and adaptation”*

Patton, 2018, p. 9

Broadly, DE can be used to evaluate projects and programs in an ongoing way as they evolve both in their trajectory and goals (Gamble, 2008; Patton, 2010). In these situations, programs and initiatives often rely on principles that can be adhered to in order to navigate this complexity (Patton, 2018). Principles-focused evaluation (P-FE) has emerged from DE as a sub-category, and uses principles as the evaluand, or focus of evaluation (Patton, 2018). In the context of P-FE, effectiveness principles are those that guide “how to think or behave toward some desired result (either explicit or implicit), based on norms, values, beliefs, experience, and knowledge” (Patton, 2018, p. 9). P-FE consists of three main assessment components: “the meaningfulness of principles, the degree of adherence to principles, and, if adhered to, the results and impact of adherence” (Patton, 2018, p. 179).

As mentioned in the previous section on traditional evaluation, goals and outcomes are common measurements assessed using the SMART framework. These organizational goals can be greatly valuable, but some groups and organizations may choose to organize themselves based on principles instead of, or in addition to, goals. It is important to be able to clarify and evaluate principles, particularly in the context of P-FE. One framework used for the evaluability assessment of principles is the GUIDE framework (Patton, 2018). Similar to the SMART framework approach for general measurement criteria, the GUIDE framework dictates that principles should be **G**uiding, **U**seful, **I**nspiring, **D**evelopmental, and **E**valuable in order to be considered “successful” (Patton, 2018). The five criteria are explained in detail below:

1. Guiding: The principle should provide general direction, while offering advice and determining priorities for action (Patton, 2018). The principle should lay out a course of action that will improve the overall effectiveness of the organization (Patton, 2018)
2. Useful: The principle should be “interpretable, doable, feasible, and actionable” (Patton, 2018, p. 38). It should provide information on how to be effective at achieving some desirable result and assist in decision making processes (Patton, 2018).
3. Inspiring: Ultimately, principles should matter to the stakeholders and organizations using them, and be grounded in ethical standards (Patton, 2018).
4. Developmental: Principles should be able to adapt to context and be applied in a variety of situations. It is not confined by a particular timeline, and it is able to adapt to complexity and changing environments (Patton, 2018).
5. Evaluable: This component determines whether or not the principle is ready for evaluation (Patton, 2018).

There are several differences between the SMART and GUIDE frameworks (Patton, 2018). One of the most significant differences is that SMART goals require quantitative variables that can be measured and analyzed statistically, in contrast to GUIDE principles which can take advantage of multiple and mixed methods for evaluation (Patton, 2018, p. 39). Another key difference is that unlike organizational goals, which are often focused on outcome attainment, principles provide general guidance in terms of both process and outcomes (Patton, 2018). While rules and goals are effective for management within simple problems, complex adaptive systems will require situational awareness in order to find viable solutions (Patton, 2010). Using principles in these situations can provide several benefits, such as bringing coherence to an organization while still allowing flexibility and adaptability to uncertainty (Patton, 2018).

### 3.5.5 Cross-Cultural Evaluation

*“Within cross-cultural evaluation settings...understanding local cultural norms and the parameters of cultural context helps ground the evaluation in the local cultural, historical and political dynamics of the community”*

Chouinard, 2014, p. 333

Broadly, cross-cultural evaluation can take place between any two or more different cultures (Al Hudib, Cousins, Oza, Lakshminarayana, & Bhat, 2016). The first evidence of cross-cultural evaluation taking place was amongst African American researchers, who were undertaking evaluation in ways that captured and expressed the racial segregation taking place at the time (Chouinard & Cousins, 2009). Over time, cross-cultural evaluations have become more popular as places become more multicultural and disparities amongst cultural groups garner public attention (Chouinard & Cousins, 2009).

Culturally competent evaluation is another term used to describe this form of evaluation, an approach that takes place at the interplay between “program context and the evaluator’s perspective” (Chouinard & Cousins, 2007, p. 45). Developing evaluation that is culturally competent requires moving past a simple appreciation and recognition of different cultures, and towards an enriched understanding of historical context and the power dynamics that are inherent in these types of interactions (Chouinard & Cousins, 2007). This distinction is particularly important when working with Indigenous communities, where these power dynamics are even more pervasive as a result of historical events (Chouinard & Cousins, 2007). Cross-cultural evaluation tends to be more participatory than traditional evaluation approaches, making it a useful tool to navigate the complexities and particular context of a particular individual community (Chouinard & Cousins, 2007). This participatory aspect is reflected heavily in the relationship between the evaluator and the community or stakeholders. The relationships created

under cross-cultural evaluation are interconnected, in which evaluator and stakeholder co-create knowledge and findings in ways that are mutually beneficial (Chouinard & Cousins, 2009).

These relationships will also influence the evaluation process itself, which has further implications for the subsequent evaluation findings (Chouinard & Cousins, 2009). The use of cross-cultural as a term can be particularly useful when dealing with situations where the evaluator is not part of the culture or group under evaluation, to highlight that two or more distinct cultures are interacting with one another (Chouinard & Cousins, 2009).

Cross-cultural approaches to evaluation have different or additional dimensions beyond external accountability, which is a primary focus of traditional evaluation (McKenzie, 1997). Cross-cultural evaluation should also place emphasis on broad community empowerment, healing, and changing the narratives of the disempowered people that are often pervasive in the dominant culture (Chouinard & Cousins, 2007; McKenzie, 1997). Empowerment of communities and stakeholders may take the form of more participatory or collaborative approaches. In order for evaluation to be meaningful and beneficial to communities, it should be negotiated between the evaluator and the community (Cousins et al., 2013). This ensures that the unique context, taking into account the historical, cultural, social, and ecological dimensions, are reflected in the evaluation process (Cousins et al., 2013).

Within cross-cultural contexts, program evaluators need to be acutely aware of cultural and contextual differences. Failure to do so “can cause conflict, frustration, and ultimately program failure” (Al Hudib et al., 2016, p. 341). One tool often used in cross-cultural evaluations is the use of a person or group (referred to as boundary spanning) who can bridge the cultural gap and facilitate meaningful conversations between the evaluator and the community (Chouinard & Cousins, 2009). One challenge with this is that it may oversimplify the variation and

heterogeneity that exists within communities, as well as ignoring intersectionality as shaping individuals' identities (Chouinard & Cousins, 2009)

### **3.5.6 Indigenous Evaluation**

Due to the close relationship between research and evaluation, evaluation can be a difficult concept to introduce into many Indigenous communities (LaFrance & Nichols, 2008). Some people perceive evaluation in the Western sense to be exploitative and oppressive, and to have failed communities in the past (LaFrance & Nichols, 2008). To counter this, some authors have suggested changing the connotation of evaluation to focus less on judgment and more on opportunities for learning (LaFrance & Nichols, 2008). Evaluation should “be grounded in Indigenous epistemologies” in order to be useful and meaningful to the community or program being studied (LaFrance & Nichols, 2008, p. 16). This may involve following specific cultural protocols or ceremonies to ground evaluation in Indigenous ways of knowing (LaFrance & Nichols, 2008). As well, similarly to Indigenous research, Indigenous approaches to evaluation should also include Elders throughout the process (LaFrance & Nichols, 2008). When conducting evaluation in Indigenous communities, it is important for the evaluator to understand the community's culture, *and* the broader social, political, and historical contexts that underpin the relationship between Indigenous communities and the dominant Canadian culture (Chouinard & Cousins, 2007). These relationships are muddled with exploitation and assimilation as the result of over 500 years of colonization, described in more detail in Chapter Two .

A recent review of evaluation in Indigenous contexts noted that the foci are similar to those of developmental and other alternative evaluations; namely context sensitivity and stakeholder empowerment (Chouinard & Cousins, 2007). This indicates that Indigenous-focused evaluation may be able to use methods and tools commonly used in DE, P-FE, and other alternative

approaches. However, a more recent study that examined 27 Indigenous evaluation reports in Canada found that the majority of them were summative (Jacob & Desautels, 2014). Given the recent and increasing popularity of alternative evaluation approaches, it is possible that in the future fewer of these reports will focus on formative and summative evaluations.

Fundamentally, Indigenous evaluation “should respect the unique ways of knowing of Aboriginal peoples and primarily use culturally established ways of communicating” (Johnston, 2008a, p. 1). Evaluation should focused on a “reciprocal appreciation”, where both the evaluator and the community partake in the knowledge generation and receive the benefits from the evaluation (Johnston, 2013). Western evaluation approaches may miss the mark by focusing more on individual outcomes and less on collective benefits (Johnston, 2008a). To move away from the negative connotations of evaluation, Indigenous evaluation should respect the ways Indigenous people would like to share their thoughts and experiences, potentially shifting away from standardized measurements and methods, and towards Indigenous epistemologies and practices that are firmly rooted in the culture and context of the community (Chouinard & Cousins, 2009; Johnston, 2008a). Due to the heterogeneity amongst Indigenous communities, and Indigenous-focused programs, there is no “best practice” approach to Indigenous evaluation. Instead, following the concept of culture-specific research methods, evaluation approaches should be developed following the guidelines and protocols that are the most appropriate to the community in which they will be used (Drawson et al., 2017; Johnston, 2008a).

### **3.5.7 Challenges to Evaluation**

Alternative forms of evaluation, despite their utility, may not be as easily and quickly supported by project partners. Since traditional evaluation often measures project outcomes, there may be push back or less enthusiasm when shifting the evaluand to innovation or principles (Poth et al.,



2012). Additionally, more participatory evaluation approaches require a relationship built on trust between the evaluator and the project team, which needs to be established and maintained throughout the process (Poth et al., 2012; Rey et al., 2014). To create trust and support, some scholars have suggested using more collaborative approaches to developing evaluation frameworks (Poth et al., 2012). Doing so ensures that the project team and associated partners will have their accountability needs met and therefore will have greater buy-in (Poth et al., 2012). The legacy of exploitation and marginalization in Indigenous communities can pose additional challenges for developing trust and meaningful relationships, particularly for evaluators coming from perceived places of power (Chouinard & Cousins, 2009). In addition, communities and agencies may have different, and often conflicting, needs for the evaluation which may not be easily reconcilable for the evaluator (Richmond, Peterson, & Betts, 2008).

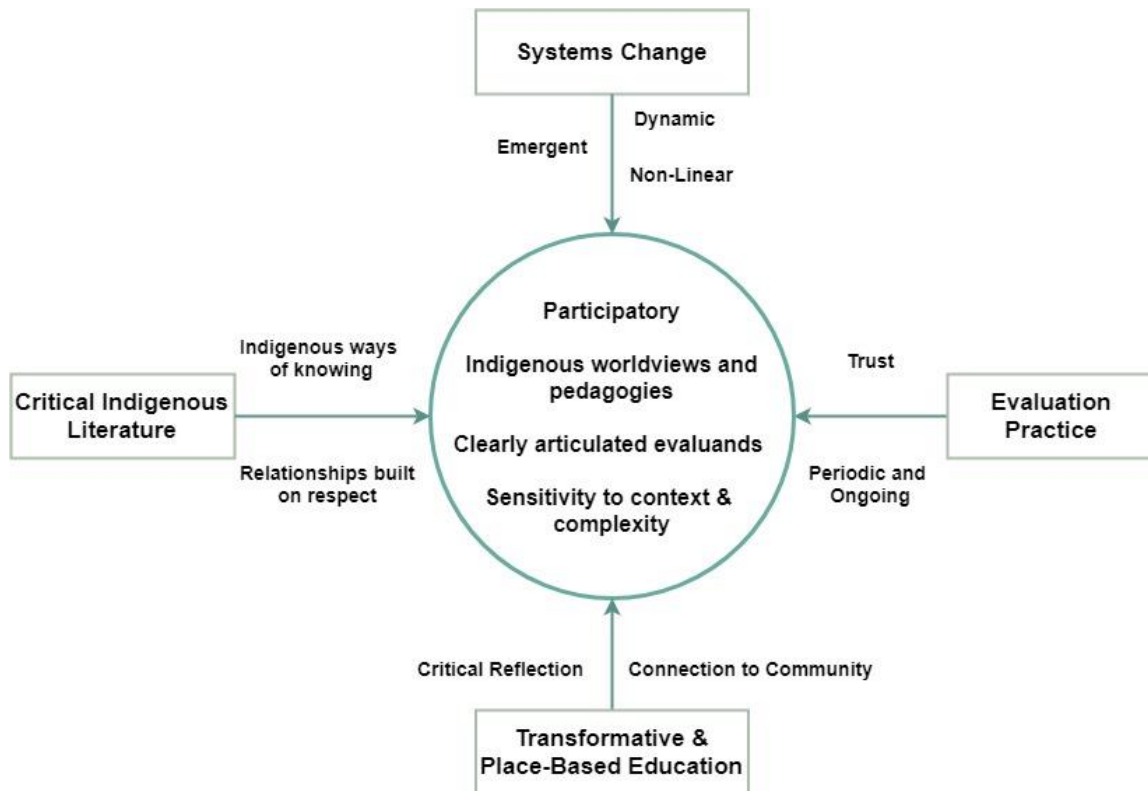
As well, despite the criticisms towards traditional program evaluation, alternative approaches may not always be appropriate (Cousins et al., 2013; Patton, 2010). When using U-FE as the underlying evaluative framework, the most important factor is what the intended use of the evaluation is. If immediate outcomes and results are known and measurable, then summative evaluation will be more appropriate than P-FE or DE. Ultimately, the evaluation must match the particular situation and needs of the users, regardless of how innovative or ground-breaking any one approach may be (Patton, 2010). Participatory evaluation approaches, despite their benefits, may cause more harm than good if the context does not require the evaluator giving up control over the process (Cousins et al., 2013). Evaluators must be aware of the context, and consider the implications of collaborative evaluation (Cousins et al., 2013).

One challenge in cross-cultural and Indigenous evaluations is how to meet criteria for “validation”. Conventional metrics for research validation are created in the absence of context,

to ensure generalizability. Some evaluation scholars advocate that evaluation must be “sufficiently neutral, nonpartisan, and dispassionate about that which is evaluated to avoid unrecognized biases” in order to be deemed useful (Worthen, 2001, p. 414). On the other hand, these forms of evaluation are highly context dependent, and often speak more about personal lived experiences and less about generalizable outcomes (Chouinard & Cousins, 2007). For this reason, it can be difficult to validate evaluation findings using metrics created in drastically different environments (Chouinard & Cousins, 2007). Several scholars have suggested alternative constructs of validity, including “multicultural validity” and “relevance validity”. Multicultural validity is an approach to determine if the findings and understandings of the evaluation match the cross-cultural context in which they were created (Kirkhart, 1995). Relevance validity is a construct used to determine whether or not the findings are representative of and true to the community under study (Stanfield, 1999). Both of these approaches support the notion that all knowledge, including the concept of validity, is socially constructed, and therefore there are ways of measuring validity beyond the positivistic, Western scientific approach (Chouinard & Cousins, 2007).

### **3.6 Synthesis**

Through the four major realms of literature (systems change, transformative learning, critical Indigenous literature, program evaluation), there are several common themes and ideas. These themes can be regarded as benchmarks for best practice for programs looking to undertake transformative education and evaluation in complex and cross-cultural contexts. The following figure (Figure 4) displays these main themes and the linkages across the literature.



**Figure 4. Conceptual Framework for Best Practice based on the literature review. The four main bodies of literature can be found in the boxes around the edge: Systems Change, Critical Indigenous Literature, Transformative and Place-Based Education, and Evaluation Practice. From the literature, four main themes were identified as common principles which can be regarded as best practice. Programs and their evaluations should be participatory, should include Indigenous worldviews and pedagogies, clearly articulate evaluands, and be sensitive to context and complexity.**

This conceptual framework provides a lens in which to describe and understand any program that embodies these four concepts in its design. Drawing from the four main areas of literature, the centre of the circle represents some common themes: using participatory approaches, integrating and incorporating Indigenous worldviews and pedagogies into the classroom, clearly articulating evaluands, and building in sensitivity to context and complexity concepts. This conceptual framework can also serve to describe some of the strengths and opportunities for improvement within any program that chooses to use this evaluative framework. These four themes represent what a program should strive for in its education and evaluation based on the assumption that is a

cross-cultural, complex adaptive system that strives to offer transformative and place-based learning experiences to students.

Programs undertaking cross-cultural, transformative education and evaluation should include participatory methods throughout. The program should utilize Elders and knowledge keepers from the community into the classroom to ground the teachings in place and culture (Bartlett et al., 2012; Castleden et al., 2013). The program should also provide opportunities for students to have agency in the classroom in order to foster their transformative learning experience, and provide multiple opportunities and methods for program evaluation throughout the duration of the program (Castleden et al., 2013; Chouinard, 2014; Poth et al., 2012; Rey et al., 2014; Shilling, 2002). The program evaluation should also extend beyond the student experience to capture the perception and experience of the program from the perspectives of instructors and the greater community, in order to acknowledge complexity and interconnectedness (Chouinard & Cousins, 2007, 2009; Lavallee, 2009; McKenzie, 1997; Richmond et al., 2008).

Any organization operating in a cross-cultural context offering education in reconciliation studies should be inclusive of Indigenous worldviews and pedagogies. This will look different in every context, since no two Indigenous nations have the same pedagogies, knowledges, or ways of knowing (Drawson et al., 2017; Lavallee, 2009). Central to critical Indigenous literature is the concept that no two Nations or communities have the same protocols, practices, or knowledges (Lavallee, 2009). In order to truly ground this education in the Indigenous community, it must be tailored to uniquely fit the communities it operates within based on local Indigenous knowledge, values, and wishes (Drawson et al., 2017; Johnston, 2008b; Koster et al., 2012; Lavallee, 2009). There are multiple ways to bring Indigenous ways of knowing and ethical practices into the classroom, including: getting students out onto the land and to ground their learning in place (and

learn the concept of land as the first teacher) (Ahenakew, 2016; Bang et al., 2014; Donald, 2009; Johnson & Murton, 2007; Kasworm & Bowles, 2012; McKeon, 2012; Scully, 2012; Simpson, 2014); bringing in Elders and local knowledge keepers to ensure Indigenous knowledge is being taught in respectful and appropriate ways (Axworthy et al., 2016; Bartlett et al., 2012; Castleden et al., 2013; Lavallee, 2009); creating safe spaces for students to learn and ask questions (Castleden et al., 2013; Hatcher et al., 2009); and adhering to OCAP and the four R's when undertaking activities (be it outreach, service learning, or research) in the community (Castleden et al., 2012; First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2014; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Wilson, 2003).

Any program that is looking to incorporate evaluation into its processes needs to have clearly articulated evaluands, which are the focus of the evaluation (Patton, 2010, 2018). As reflected in the literature on program evaluation, this can take a variety of forms, including program outcomes, goals, or organizational principles (Patton, 2010, 2018). Furthermore, the evaluation should be flexible and willing to adapt to changes to the program or the broader context. A program looking to foster transformative education, for instance, might tailor an evaluation package around tracking shifting perspectives over time (Kasworm & Bowles, 2012; Stuckey et al., 2013). Alternatively, the evaluation could be based around the degree to which Indigenous values and ways of knowing are incorporated into the classroom (Al Hudib et al., 2016; Johnston, 2008b, 2013; LaFrance & Nichols, 2008). Regardless of the specific intent of the evaluation, a clearly communicated evaluand will bring coherence to the program and will assist in overall program development (Fagen et al., 2011; Patton, 2010, 2018). Being able to understand the driving force or intent behind the program will assist in determining the most

appropriate method of evaluation and will also provide an arc to work under when considering program design.

Finally, from a Western lens, this type of programming also must be cognizant of the particular context it operates within. There needs to be willingness for the organization and everyone involved to adapt as the program, and the organization as a whole, continues to evolve (Boal & Schultz, 2007; Patton, 2010). As the discussions on reconciliation continue across the country, programs must be able to respond to these changes (Patton, 2010; Westley et al., 2006).

Moreover, since student and community experiences are important to track, the program must be flexible to adapt to any concerns as they come up. If an organization operates as a complex, adaptive system, then operations, activities, and evaluation must also be receptive to and adaptable in the face of complexity (Duit & Galaz, 2008; Hartvigsen et al., 1998). Trying to understand the successes or shortcomings of the program without considering the broader context runs the risk of misinterpreting these actions and losing sense of the full picture. This includes considering the particular communities it operates within, tailoring the program the organization's unique context, but also considering the larger social landscape across the country (Snyder, 2008; Westley & Laban, 2012). The ongoing and fluctuating political climate in Canada, particularly in relation to reconciliation, can have huge implications for program content and reception.

This framework will be used in the Results and Analysis chapter to evaluate the operations of the HGI when developing and implementing their Reconciliation Studies Semester (RSS). This best practice framework will be used to highlight strengths, and weaknesses and opportunities for improvement, over the four years of the program, from 2015-2018.

## CHAPTER FOUR: CASE STUDY

*“History matters. It matters not just because we can learn from the past, but because the present and the future are connected to the past by the continuity of a society's institutions.”*

Douglass C. North (1990, p. vii) from (Boal & Schultz, 2007, p. 411)

The historical underpinnings and the context of the Haida Gwaii Institute (HGI) are vitally important to understanding the current status of the organization and to hypothesize on possible futures. The present state of an organization is built upon the events of its past, so it is essential to articulate this history in order to understand the processes and functions in place today (Boal & Schultz, 2007). These concepts are also echoed in systems thinking, in which the initial starting conditions of a system or program can largely influence its current state and future trajectory (Ramalingam et al., 2008; Westley et al., 2017).

Haida Gwaii as a place has a long history marked by periods of colonization, assimilation, and resurgence and sovereignty by the Haida people. When equipped with an understanding of the history of Haida Gwaii in terms of reconciliation and Indigenous sovereignty, there are clear case studies which can be used as grounded examples for students interested in reconciliation-focused education. Having students come to live and learn in a place like Haida Gwaii provides an opportunity to explore and reflect on a possible future of what sovereignty and self-governance might look like in Canada. The decades of hard work the Haida Nation have undertaken to organize and assemble in order to collaborate with the provincial and federal governments, provide students with grounded case studies of Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments working alongside one another for resource management.

*Note: information acquired directly from HGI website and other publicly available documents has been cited as such. Otherwise, information pertaining to the HGI and its programs is the result of participant observation and a synthesis of information from meeting minutes, strategic plans, and other internal documents provided by the HGI. See the Methodology and Methods chapter for more information on this data collection process.*

## **4.1 Haida Gwaii**

### **4.1.1 History of Haida Gwaii**

Haida Gwaii is an island archipelago, comprised of approximately 350 islands, located 100km off the coast of northwest British Columbia (see Figure 5) (Lee, 2012). Separated from the mainland by the Hecate Strait, regarded by Environment Canada as “the fourth most dangerous body of water in the world”, Haida Gwaii is the traditional and unceded territory of the Haida Nation (Council of the Haida Nation, 2018b; Environment Canada, 1992, p. 113). According to Haida history, the Haida people have inhabited Haida Gwaii since time immemorial (Council of the Haida Nation, 2018b). Geological and archeological records corroborate this, with signs of early human inhabitancy of the area around Haida Gwaii dating back almost 14,000 years (The Canadian Press, 2014).





**Figure 5. Map of Haida Gwaii (Credit - Steven Fick/Canadian Geographic). The communities of Masset and Old Massett are where the Reconciliation Studies Semester took place. The head offices of the Haida Gwaii Institute are located between the communities of Queen Charlotte and Skidegate. The other main communities on the islands are: Tlell, Port Clements, and Sandspit.**

The two largest islands are Graham Island and Moresby Island, with hundreds of small islands and islets surrounding them (Takeda, 2015). Haida Gwaii has some of the few remaining sections of intact coastal temperate rainforest in the world, and has been referred to by environmentalists as the “Galapagos of the North” as the result of its rich biodiversity and variety of endemic species (Takeda, 2015). The biological and cultural importance of Haida Gwaii is exemplified through the Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site

which takes up about a third of the islands, which can be seen on the map above (Figure 5) and described in more detail below.

Although the first reported contact was with Juan Perez in 1774, Haida Gwaii was formally recognized by European settlers in 1787 when Captain George Dixon sailed around Haida Gwaii and surveyed the islands (Dehaas, 2009; Takeda, 2015). It was given the colonial name “Queen Charlotte Islands” at this time, and remained the name used by Canada until 2010. As part of the Haida Gwaii Reconciliation Act, which received Royal Assent on June 3, 2010, the Haida gave back the name “Haida Gwaii” to British Columbia to be used as the official name for the islands (BC Geographical Names Office, n.d.). Haida Gwaii translates to “islands of the people”, and the name was first used by the Haida people again in the 1970s as an alternative to the Queen Charlotte Islands (BC Geographical Names Office, n.d.).

Like countless other Indigenous nations across North America, the Haida were exposed to several diseases from the European colonizers and settlers (Council of the Haida Nation, 2009b). The most devastating of the diseases was smallpox, deliberately introduced to the Haida nation between 1774 and 1890 (Council of the Haida Nation, 2009b). During this time, the population of the Haida went from an estimated 10-30,000 people down to 600 as the result of disease introduction (Collison, 2018; Council of the Haida Nation, 2009b). Despite the fact that prior to contact the Haida were spread across 20 villages throughout the islands, the impact of smallpox forced the survivors to congregate in Gaw Old Massett and Hlgaagilda Skidegate, now both First Nations reserves (Takeda, 2015).

In addition to the smallpox and disease epidemics that struck the islands, Haida Gwaii was transformed by the sea otter fur trade, fishing, and logging operations (Takeda, 2015). The sea

otter fur trade took off in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and between the 1780s and 1820s, the sea otter had been extirpated from Haida Gwaii (Livingstone, 2014). The sea otter hunt was banned in 1911 and sea otters are listed as a species of special concern both under the Species at Risk Act (SARA) and the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) (Government of Canada, 2011; Livingstone, 2014). Commercial logging operations on Haida Gwaii first began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and were at peak harvesting in the 1980s with about 2.6 million cubic meters being harvested annually (Pierce Lefebvre Consulting, 2006). The forests of Haida Gwaii are largely comprised of Western hemlock, western red cedar, Sitka spruce, yellow cedar, and shore pine species (Pojar, 2008). These forests also include monumental Western Red Cedar trees (often used for poles and canoes), culturally modified trees, and a countless amount of habitat for several terrestrial and avian species including sooty grouse, goshawk and Haida Gwaii black bear (a unique sub-species of black bear found only on Haida Gwaii).

#### **4.1.2 Demographics of Haida Gwaii**

Haida Gwaii is comprised of seven main communities: Daajing Giids (*Queen Charlotte*), Hlgaagilda (*Skidegate*), Sandspit, Gamadiis (*Port Clements*), Tllaal (*Tlell*), and Gaw Tlagee (*Masset* and *Old Massett*). Sandspit is the largest community located on Moresby Island, and has the Sandspit Airport which services one Air Canada flight daily to and from Vancouver International Airport. The remainder of the communities are located on Graham Island, with Gaw Tlagee *Masset* having a municipal airport that flies to and from Vancouver through Pacific Coastal Airlines. Traveling between the Graham and Moresby islands is managed through BC Ferries, offering 7-10 journeys each way daily on the Alliford Bay – Skidegate route, which takes about 20 minutes one way (BC Ferries, 2018). Access to mainland British Columbia is

limited by either air travel, via Sandspit or Gaw Tlagee *Masset*, or by the BC ferry route to Prince Rupert twice a week, which delivers groceries and other goods to the island.

Table 2 displays the demographics of the Haida Gwaii communities, according to the 2016 Census from Statistics Canada (Statistics Canada, 2018).

**Table 2. Demographics of Communities on Haida Gwaii**

Community	Population (2016)	Self-declared Aboriginal Identity
Sandspit	296	20
Queen Charlotte	852	140
Skidegate (reserve)	837	720
Tlell	183	15
Port Clements	282	50
Masset	793	350
Old Massett (reserve)	555	540
Haida Gwaii (total)	3798	1835

#### 4.1.3 Haida Gwaii Governance

Current governance on Haida Gwaii has several different components. Haida Gwaii is a part of British Columbia, and is included in the North Coast electoral district, currently represented by NDP MLA Jennifer Rice in the British Columbia Legislative Assembly since 2013 (Elections BC, 2017; Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, n.d.). Federally, Haida Gwaii is in the Skeena-Bulkley Valley riding, which is held by NDP Member of Parliament Nathan Cullen since 2004 (New Democratic Party of Canada, 2019). Furthermore, under *Indian Act* legislation, there are two First Nations reserves on Haida Gwaii, Skidegate and Old Massett, which are legally governed under the *Indian Act*.

Beyond these Canadian approaches to governance, the Haida Nation has their own government known as the Council of the Haida Nation (CHN). Formed officially on December 7, 1974, the CHN was formed with the intention of providing the Haida with a single political entity with which to help settle land claims on Haida Gwaii (Collison, 2018; Council of the Haida Nation, 2018b).

One of the most fascinating pieces of reconciliation in action on Haida Gwaii is the Kunst'aa Guu – Kunst'aayah reconciliation protocol (meaning “In the Beginning”) (Haida Nation, 2016). Signed into law in 2009 by the Haida Nation and the Province of British Columbia, the protocol outlines that although both parties hold different perspectives with respect to title and ownership of Haida Gwaii, they are choosing to work together collaboratively through shared-decision making and developing a new relationship for governance moving forward (Council of the Haida Nation, 2009a). One of the outcomes of Kunst'aa Guu – Kunst'aayah was the name change from Queen Charlotte Islands back to Haida Gwaii, an important step in recognizing the importance of the Haida people on Haida Gwaii. Another significant outcome from Kunst'aa Guu – Kunst'aayah was the creation of the Solutions Table, a joint decision-making body for land-use and development decisions that has members from both the Haida Nation and the Province of British Columbia (Haida Nation, 2016).

The Haida Nation most recently had an election on December 2, 2018 (Council of the Haida Nation, 2018a). Gaagwiis *Jason Alsop* was elected as President of the Haida Nation, replacing kil tlaats 'gaa *Peter Lantin* (Council of the Haida Nation, 2018a). Before becoming CHN president, Gaagwiis was employed with the HGI as a Project Coordinator for the SSHRC Insight Grant in early 2018, to coordinate research on-island and act as a liaison between the HGI, the Haida Gwaii Museum, and the other grant research partners.

#### **4.1.4 Haida Sovereignty**

A pivotal moment in the history of the Haida asserting sovereignty over Haida Gwaii was the stand at Athlii Gwaii in 1985. In 1985, in the face of increasing logging pressure on the southern portion of Haida Gwaii, the Haida designated the area now known as Gwaii Haanas as a Haida Heritage Site (National Centre for First Nations Governance, 2013). As part of this action, many Haida set up blockades on logging roads on Athlii Gwaii (Lynn Island) to protest continued forest harvesting in the area (von der Porten, 2014). Significant portions of old growth forest had already been logged across Haida Gwaii and second growth forests were already being logged, exemplifying the longevity of logging operations on the islands.

Prior to the stand at Athlii Gwaii, the Haida were already working to protect and preserve their lands and waters from excessive harvesting. The most significant of these efforts was the Haida Gwaii Watchmen Program. One of several watchmen programs that exist for First Nations in Canada (other Nations with watchmen or guardian programs include the Gitga'at, the Haisla, and the Metlakatla), the mandate of the Haida Gwaii Watchmen Program is to safeguard and protect Gwaii Haanas (Ecotrust Canada, 2013). The program was first created in the early 1970s by Captain Gold, a Haida knowledge keeper, who would often travel down to Gwaii Haanas by canoe to look after old village sites (Collison, 2018). The Watchmen program officially began in 1985, the same year that Gwaii Haanas was initially established by the Haida (von der Porten, 2014). By 1974, the controversy surrounding logging permits on Haida Gwaii reached a critical point, which provided the impetus for the Haida to formally organize a system of government and create the CHN (Collison, 2018; National Centre for First Nations Governance, 2013).

With a formal government put in place in the years leading up to the Athlii Gwaii protests, the Haida were able to establish clear goals and objectives of what they were looking for from

industry and government (von der Porten, 2014). The Haida undertook these protests under the assumption that they had never ceded title of the land to the government, and Haida Gwaii belonged to the Haida (von der Porten, 2014). The protests attracted many environmental organizations and groups, and encouraged the notion that any environmental campaign should explicitly consider and include Indigenous groups, ideally having them fill leadership roles (von der Porten, 2014). Moreover, actions by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and other news outlets provided media coverage of the protests, elevating the story to one of national interest (von der Porten, 2014). Several elders were arrested on the front line of the protests by the RCMP and, although no charges were ever filed, these images prompted discussions across the country about including Indigenous voices in environmental activism and decision making (von der Porten, 2014). The stand at Athlii Gwaii can be described as a social innovation because it fundamentally shifted the systems around governance and environmental decision making in ways that have advanced Indigenous rights and sovereignty (von der Porten, 2014).

One of the most significant outcomes of the stand at Athlii Gwaii was the formal establishment of the Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve, National Marine Conservation Area, and Haida Heritage Site, which is typically referred to as Gwaii Haanas. Gwaii Haanas translates into English as “islands of beauty”, and is one of the few national parks managed cooperatively in Canada (managed in this case between the Haida Nation and the Government of Canada through Parks Canada). This cooperative agreement is formalized through the Archipelago Management Board (AMB), which has equal representation on it from both the Haida Nation and the Government of Canada (Collison, 2018). The management of Gwaii Haanas is outlined in a similar fashion to the Kunst’aa Guu – Kunst’aayah, which outlines an “agree to disagree” policy in regards to title and ownership of the lands and waters of Haida Gwaii. All decisions must go

through the AMB and a consensus must be reached before decisions are made in regards to Gwaii Haanas (Collison, 2018).

The area of Gwaii Haanas is protected from the “tops of the mountains to the depths of the ocean”, through the Gwaii Haanas Gina ‘Waadluxan KilGuhlGa Land-Sea-People Management Plan (Collison, 2018, p. 118; Parks Canada, 2018). The Land-Sea-People Plan was unveiled and launched in November 2018 after four years of meetings, discussions, and rounds of consultation between Parks Canada, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and the CHN (Parks Canada, 2019). Throughout the development process, public consultation took place with the general public of Haida citizens, key stakeholders including those involved in fishing and tourism industries, and the Gwaii Haanas Advisory Committee (Parks Canada, 2019). The Gwaii Haanas Advisory Committee, created as part of the development of the Land-Sea-People Management Plan, is a 13-person group that were identified as having significant knowledge and experience related to Gwaii Haanas, and provided guidance and advice throughout the development of the plan (Parks Canada, 2019). Important to note is that although this agreement is very progressive compared to the majority of Canada, it is still considered to be a colonial construct based on the fact that Canada has not yet awarded title of Haida Gwaii back to the Haida (von der Porten, 2014).

Another significant political event that shaped the future of sovereignty on Haida Gwaii was Island Spirit Rising, a series of protests that took place in the early 2000s, coming to a head in 2005 (Council of the Haida Nation, 2018b). Island Spirit Rising was an all-island initiative to protest the sale of tree farm licenses that directly violated the ongoing 2004 Supreme Court case (described in more detail below). Protesters blocked the roads so that Weyerhaeuser Company Limited (the logging company) and the British Columbia Forest Service were unable to access



their sites and offices (Broadhead, 2005). These protests resulted in the CHN and the Province of British Columbia negotiating shared decision making powers over Haida Gwaii, and helped to protect cultural forested areas that were previously open to logging (Council of the Haida Nation, 2018b).

#### **4.1.5 Haida Title and the Duty to Consult**

Another way the Haida are asserting sovereignty in a modern context is through the justice system and court cases. In 2004, the CHN took the Province of British Columbia (through the Minister of Forests) and Weyerhaeuser Company Limited to court over the 1999 transfer of a Tree Farm License (TFL) without adequately consulting the Haida (Bains & Ishkanian, 2016; Supreme Court of Canada, 2004). The desire to protect Haida Gwaii's forests and formalize Haida authority of the land can be traced back to the Athlii Gwaii protests (von der Porten, 2014). The *Haida Nation v. British Columbia (Minister of Forests)* (Haida) case was an important step in advancing the practical realities of "duty to consult and accommodate". As mentioned in 3.4.5 Reconciliation of the Literature Review chapter, Aboriginal and Treaty rights became constitutionally protected through the patriation of the Constitution in 1982. After the duty to consult was enshrined in the Constitution, decades of Supreme Court rulings and decisions have shaped the definition of the duty to consult, and how and when it applies in project decisions.

Prior to the 2004 Haida case, Aboriginal or Treaty rights had to have been proven or settled in court in order to be considered by the Crown in approving projects or developments (Promislow, 2013). The Haida Nation have yet to settle their land claims in the Canadian courts, but asserted that the duty to consult still applied to them because they planned to prove title through the court system. The court ruled in favour of the Haida, stating that "the duty arises when the Crown has

knowledge, real or constructive, of the potential existence of the Aboriginal right or title and contemplates conduct that might adversely affect it” (Supreme Court of Canada, 2004, p. 513).

This signified that although the Haida Nation had yet to settle their title claim, they still had to be consulted on activities taking place on their traditional territory. This success of this case can be partly attributed to the decades of legal precedence that had come out of the Supreme Court of Canada as it relates to Aboriginal rights and title from Indigenous people and communities across the country (von der Porten, 2014).

The Haida case also set a precedent that governments can discharge the duty to consult to third parties, such as consultants and project proponents (Bains & Ishkanian, 2016). This means that although the duty to consult falls on the Crown, they are able to delegate specific tasks related to consultation to other groups involved in the overall project decision making process. Another important outcome of the was the clarification and explicit mention that although Indigenous people must be consulted when any proposed project or undertaking has the potential to affect Aboriginal and Treaty rights, they are **not** given veto power over the final project decision (Bains & Ishkanian, 2016).

The decision from the Haida case assisted the Tsilhqot’in Nation in successfully being granted title over their traditional territory beyond the boundaries of “Indian reserves”, the first case in Canada to do so (Bains & Ishkanian, 2016). The Haida Nation is now moving through the British Columbia Supreme Court to assert title over the entirety of Haida Gwaii, “including the land, waters, seabed, airspace, and all its living creatures” (Hudson, 2018a). The case is going to be heard in two phases: the first to determine the Haida Nation’s claim that they have title, and the second to determine damages and compensation from British Columbia and Canada as the result of losses from Aboriginal and Title rights (Hudson, 2018a).

## 4.2 Haida Gwaii Institute

The remainder of this case study chapter is devoted to the Haida Gwaii Institute (HGI). First, the general history and structure of the organization will be described, followed by more in-depth descriptions of the semester programs with particular emphasis on the Reconciliation Studies Semester (RSS) since it is the focus of this research.

**Note on Terminology:** *when referring to the past activities of the HGI, the name HGHEs will occasionally be used since this was the name they have operated under since the organization was founded. Current activities of the organization will be described as the HGI.*

The HGI was first launched as the Haida Gwaii Higher Education Society (HGHEs) in 2010 (Haida Gwaii Institute, 2019a). The HGHEs is a non-profit organization that focuses on the development and delivery of transformative education to post-secondary students (Haida Gwaii Institute, 2019a). The idea for the HGHEs was conceptualized two years prior to its launch, in 2008, when a group of people came together from Haida Gwaii, British Columbia, and across Canada to brainstorm on how to provide economic diversification opportunities and education around natural resource management on Haida Gwaii (Haida Gwaii Institute, 2019a).

From the initial conversations in 2008, the HGHEs began brainstorming what types of programming could be offered on Haida Gwaii, and identified several reasons for creating a program, including: economic diversification, opportunities for local post-secondary students earn credits at home, and local economic development. Courses were created to highlight the history and unique resource management systems on Haida Gwaii and emphasized a place-based and experiential learning model (Haida Gwaii Institute, 2019a). With these pedagogical approaches in mind, the courses were developed and became accredited through the Faculty of Forestry at the University of British Columbia (UBC). The first HGHEs program in Natural

Resource Studies was offered in the winter of 2010, with nine students enrolled in the program (Haida Gwaii Institute, 2019a). After the success of the Natural Resource Studies program, the HGHEs added an additional, complementary semester in Natural Resource Science in 2012.

From the inception of the organization until the transition to the Haida Gwaii Institute (HGI), the organizational structure of the HGHEs was as follows:



**Figure 6. Organizational Structure of the Haida Gwaii Higher Education Society (HGHEs). The executive director of the HGHEs oversees the work of the operations manager and the finance manager, the other two full time employees of the organization. The executive director reports to and takes guidance from the Board of Directors, which provides high level strategic direction to the organization.**

The full time staff of the organization consists of the executive director, who oversees the other staff members: the operations manager and the finance manager (Haida Gwaii Institute, 2018b).

In addition, there is also a communications manager, and two program assistants who work part time throughout the year. The program assistants are largely in charge of the day to day activities of the classroom, coordinating field trips, and facilitating dialogue between the students, instructors, and other staff of the HGI. In previous years, there was a part time position of “Academic Lead” who was responsible for various aspects of curriculum development. This

position was dropped in 2016 due to a period of financial instability (described in the Results and Analysis chapter in more detail). In addition, the executive director used to report to and take guidance from an eight-member Board of Directors, which included Gwaii Haanas employees, CHN representatives, and other community members. When it was run as the HGHEs, the Board of Directors functioned largely as a decision-making body about the trajectory and direction of the HGHEs and its programs.

The organization continued to operate as the HGHEs until 2018, when the organization became the HGI as the result of formalizing the existing partnership between the HGHEs and UBC.

More information on this transition and its implications for the organization can be found in the Results and Analysis chapter of this thesis. Currently, the HGI is jointly governed between the HGI Advisory Council and the UBC Forestry Office of the Dean (Haida Gwaii Institute, 2019b).

The Advisory Council consists of the HGHEs Board of Directors members, and the HGI director, who holds a non-voting position (Haida Gwaii Institute, 2019b). The Board no longer operates in a decision-making capacity, but instead provides general direction and support for the HGI's activities and operations.

The head office of the HGI is located at the Haida Heritage Centre at *Kay Llnagaay* in *Hlgaagilda Skidegate*, a space which also houses the Haida Gwaii museum, a handful of other local organizations and business offices, a performing house, a pole carving shed, a bistro, and the classroom for the Natural Resource Studies and Natural Resource Science semesters. The Haida Heritage Centre brands itself as “an award-winning Aboriginal cultural tourism attraction”, which strives to celebrate and showcase Haida culture to residents of Haida Gwaii and tourists from around the world (Haida Heritage Centre, 2018).

### **4.2.1 Natural Resource Studies and Science programs**

The first program offered by the HGHEs on Haida Gwaii was the Natural Resource Studies semester in the winter of 2010. The courses offered through the Natural Resource Studies semester are:

- History & Politics of Resource Management
- First Nations Governance & Natural Resource Management
- Rainforest Ecology & Management
- Diversifying Resource Dependent Communities
- Case Studies in Haida Gwaii (seminar course)

The first four courses are offered block-style, each running for three weeks from Monday to Thursday. Each course is taught by a different instructor, who is typically from off-island, and is flown out to Haida Gwaii for the duration of their course. The seminar course typically runs on Friday mornings throughout the term, and students are given Friday afternoons off for “independent study”. This model proved desirable for incoming students, and the Natural Resource Studies program ran successfully for two years. As the result of this success, the HGHEs decided to create additional program opportunities for post-secondary students. In 2012, the HGHEs expanded their programming to include a second semester in Natural Resource Science, shifting the focus of the semester towards more of the biophysical elements of natural resources on Haida Gwaii. This semester runs in the fall semester, and the Natural Resource Studies semester runs in the winter semester. The organization for the Natural Resource Science semester built on a similar model to the Studies semester, with four block and one seminar courses.

The Natural Resource Science semester offers the following courses:

- Applied Ecology of Coastal Terrestrial Ecosystems
- Biophysical Dynamics of the Marine-Terrestrial interface
- Ecology & Management of Island Wildlife
- Systems Thinking for Resource Management
- Ecosystem Based Management (seminar)

Since its inception, the HGI estimates that the organization has injected nearly \$3,000,000 into the local economy (according to a 2016 Case for Support prepared for potential funders and donors). The program fees have increased slightly over the years, and now sit at \$4000 per semester. In addition, students also pay tuition to UBC as visiting students (about \$2500/term), and are responsible for their own accommodation while on Haida Gwaii. In their 2015 Strategic Plan, the HGI estimated that students spend about \$4000 in accommodation, meals, and leisure activities throughout the 4 months they are enrolled in the Haida Gwaii Semester program.

In the fall of 2013, the HGHEs decided to create materials to comprehensively capture student experience and feedback at the end of each semester. These materials were developed based on several rounds of conversations amongst the executive director, staff, and a program evaluation consultant. Collaboratively, a package of materials was created that was based on some principles of developmental evaluation as well as traditional formative and summative evaluation approaches. The developmental evaluation pieces would be geared toward larger organizational development of the HGHEs, and the formative and summative pieces would look at more of the specifics of the Haida Gwaii Semester programs themselves. Since this time was marked by a significant growth in the operations of the HGHEs (expanding from one semester program to two), it was important for the organization to be able to make meaningful improvements and

changes to the programs year to year that was based on and grounded in evidence. Pieces of the evaluation were tailored based on the values of the HGHS: wellbeing, holistic understanding, perspective transformations, and intercultural learning opportunities. There were also a small package of surveys aimed to capture more concrete, quantitative data, including an economic impact survey and a survey on the overall experience of the program (all based on Likert scale data).

The Natural Resource Studies and Science semesters have run successfully over their tenures, with typically 18-22 students participating in each semester. The courses have remained largely unchanged in terms of content, but do respond to student feedback from previous years and include contemporary relevant examples from the Haida Gwaii environment wherever possible. In addition, the evaluation packages that were first created in 2013 remained consistent for both programs until discussions on revamping the materials began in 2017, which will be described in more detail throughout this thesis.

*Context:* I personally participated in the Fall 2015 semester of the Natural Resource Science program. I have delved into some depth about my personal experience with the program and the organization in the Positionality section of the introduction chapter. However, I do think that the timing of my arrival into the program is significant. Although I was not given the opportunity to experience the organization prior to 2015, I do think that it is a particularly important year. This was the planning year for the Reconciliation Studies Semester (RSS), and marks the beginning of a significant period of growth for the HGI overall. While I am not Haida and do not have long-term lived experience of Haida Gwaii, my personal experience as a student in the program provides me with an insight that I would not likely have been able to obtain otherwise. I understand that the experience for students in the RSS is likely drastically different from my own – both in terms of the communities the students were living and learning in, as well as the significant differences in content between the two programs. However, I do think there are some similarities, particularly in the emotions and experiences of living on a small, remote set of islands for four months.



#### 4.2.2 Development of Reconciliation Studies Semester

*“Accordingly, this program will aim to educate “Canadians about the diverse concepts, principles, and practices of reconciliation... [to advance] healing and transformative social change” (TRC, p. 242).”*

##### Reconciliation Studies Semester Promotional Poster

One main goal of the HGHEs was to expand its programming beyond just the communities of Hlgaagilda *Skidegate* and Daajing Giids *Queen Charlotte*. Although the existing two semester programs often took students out of the classroom and into communities across the islands, there had yet to be significant program expansion to other parts of Haida Gwaii. The conversations on program expansion began formally taking shape in 2015 with discussions around potential new academic opportunities at the undergraduate and professional level.

The impetus for the creation of a semester exploring reconciliation was based on feedback from students in the existing HGHEs programs, especially those enrolled in the Natural Resource Studies semester. The HGHEs recognized that many students were coming into these programs with a lack of basic knowledge of the colonial history of Canada, and were missing Indigenous perspectives and experience. Moreover, at the end of term evaluation students expressed that, particularly after taking the “First Nations Governance & Natural Resource Management” course, they had just begun to scratch the surface on reconciliation and understand the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Crown. Through this feedback, the HGHEs recognized that bringing students to Haida Gwaii to learn about what reconciliation means and looks like in practice was a unique opportunity that could impact conversations on reconciliation across the country. These conversations were also timely given that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was finishing up their inquiry after seven years of traveling across the country (see Literature Review chapter for more information on the TRC and its findings).

Around the time the TRC released their Calls to Action in Spring/Summer 2015, the HGHEs hosted two days of meetings in Tlaal *Tlell* to discuss the concept of a new education opportunity to be offered in the context of Haida Gwaii. Based on input from the Board, the intent of these meetings specifically was to begin discussions on the creation a semester program with cross-discipline, senior undergraduate courses on reconciliation and resource management, as well as considering the possibility of offering sector-specific professional development programs on reconciliation.

From May 29-31, 2015, the HGHEs brought together an advisory committee for two and a half days of workshops. Haida and other Indigenous representatives, scholars from UBC and Simon Fraser University (SFU), and representatives from the provincial government came together to begin developing a broad framework for reconciliation education (Pomerleau, 2017). The purpose and role of the advisory committee was to: assist with the development of learning objectives and course design, identify potential candidates for program delivery, and to identify and provide resources. Prior to the convening of the advisory committee, participants were asked to consider the following:

*What brings you to this gathering? What is it that interested you personally and professionally to participate?*

*What is your vision for reconciliation?*

*What do students need to know, including skills, to move forward in the reconciliation process?*

Through these workshops, five key themes emerged as focal points of the discussions, which ended up becoming the titles for the five courses offered. Throughout all stages of meetings and program development, the Executive Director and the academic lead were in contact with leadership across Haida Gwaii and kept them informed as the discussions progressed. These

leadership groups included the CHN, the Skidegate Band Council, the Old Massett Band Council, and the Hereditary Chiefs Council.

The development of these courses was done through several rounds of curriculum development. Each course syllabi was co-developed between an Indigenous local from Haida Gwaii and a non-Indigenous educator or curriculum developer from off-island. The syllabi went through several rounds of edits with HGI staff, were examined and refined collaboratively, and were then approved through the UBC Senate to become accredited.

The final name for the program before it was unveiled for its pilot year was the Haida Gwaii Semester in Reconciliation Studies, also sometimes referred to as the Reconciliation Studies Semester (RSS). This name was intended to reflect that the program was not a “how-to” guide in reconciliation, but would instead explore the concept of reconciliation using grounded examples from the Haida Gwaii context. As well, throughout the planning stages of the program, there were discussions about terminology related to the semester name, and how the program was to be advertised. “Reconciliation Studies” was intended to be a place-holder until a time that a more appropriate or suitable name was chosen for the semester.

#### **4.2.3 Structure and Organization of the Reconciliation Studies Semester**

For the RSS, the HGI chose to model the new semester on the other two current programs, with four intensive block courses running for 3 weeks each Monday-Thursday and a seminar course throughout the term on Friday mornings. The themes which emerged from workshops in the 2015 planning stages became the names for the five courses, which are the following:

- First Nations and Canada (Re)writing History
- Law and Governance: Indigenous and European Traditions
- Perspectives on Reconciliation
- Reconciliation and Resource Management
- Reconciliation and Communities (seminar)

Unlike the courses in the other two semesters, which are primarily taught by instructors from off-island, the goal of the RSS was to pair on-island locals with off-island instructors to ground the content of the courses more firmly in Haida Gwaii. In the first year of the program, each course was co-taught by a local/Haida instructor and an off-island professor, predominately from UBC.

At the end of the pilot year for the RSS, an end of term debrief was conducted, as has been customary for all HGI programs since 2013. Since the program was in its pilot year, the HGI had an increased interest in student feedback to determine what aspects of the program were successful, and which may require tweaks or changes for subsequent years. A “debrief session” was created collaboratively between myself, another University of Waterloo graduate student, and HGI staff, with guidance and insight offered by a professional consultant in program evaluation. This program evaluation and subsequent findings will be described in more detail in the Findings and Analysis chapter of this thesis.

The RSS has changed the way the HGI operates on Haida Gwaii. The RSS is based out of Gaw Old Massett, with students living in Gaw Tlagee Masset and *Old Massett*, and attending classes at Sarah’s Longhouse, a space located at the far end of Gaw Old Massett. This space is a large single room, with a small kitchen and washroom space located in the back of the building. This is quite a physical contrast to the Haida Heritage Centre located between Hlgaagilda *Skidegate* and Daajing Giids *Queen Charlotte*, which houses both the head office of the HGI and the

classroom for the Natural Resource Studies and Science semesters. The Haida Heritage Centre comparatively has much more activity taking place throughout the building than Sarah's Longhouse, so there are spatial differences between the programs in addition to contextual and content-based variations.

Since the RSS has only been operational for two semesters, the organization is relatively new in the context of northern Haida Gwaii. The offices of the HGI, located in Hlgaagilda *Skidegate*, are over an hour's drive away from Gaw Tlagee Masset and *Old Massett*, creating a physical barrier between the organization and these two communities. Not only is the organization less familiar to residents in these communities, but the HGI is still in the process of settling in to this new expansion and understanding what is different about working in Gaw Tlagee Masset and *Old Massett* compared to Hlgaagilda *Skidegate* and Daajing Giids *Queen Charlotte*. Many community members and groups are unfamiliar with the HGI as an organization, despite the fact that they are very well-known in the southern communities on Graham Island. Although posters, open houses, and community meetings took place to introduce the organization into the communities, the HGI remains a relatively new group to the communities in the north end of Haida Gwaii. The physical and social infrastructure that has been developed over the ten years of HGI operations in Hlgaagilda *Skidegate* and Daajing Giids *Queen Charlotte* has yet to be established in Gaw Tlagee Masset and *Old Massett*.

After running this program for two years, the HGI determined that some aspects of the program need to be adjusted based on comments from students, instructors, and community members. Although procedural changes were made between the two years as the result of student and instructor feedback, there were still some challenges that came up that the HGI felt required a deeper evaluation and analysis. For the purpose of this evaluation, my research has focused on a

template of “best practice” principles for this type of education and evaluation. These principles, outlined in 3.6 Synthesis of the Literature Review chapter, have been used as benchmarks to determine strengths and weaknesses of the RSS in both the planning and implementation of the program. The longer term goal is that this research will be used to inform the redesign of the program to better align the program operations with best practices from the literature.

*Context:* the timeline of the RSS specifically is the focus of my analysis for the HGI. The timeline of the RSS illustrates that the program was designed with intention, through multiple rounds of consultation with local knowledge keepers, experts, and opportunities for public comment throughout its development. Despite this, after piloting the program for two years, HGI staff noticed some trends in criticism voiced by the students that was unanticipated in the planning stages. For this reason, the scale of analysis has been expanded to explore broader contextual issues, and a complexity lens has been applied to determine where some of these concerns and challenges may be stemming from. The purpose of my research is not to publicize what these challenges or causes may be, but to explore the utility of multi-scalar timeline analysis as a program evaluation tool based on discussions with the HGI.

#### **4.2.4 Haida Gwaii Summer Sessions**

As part of the HGI’s plan to continue curricular and economic expansion, the first Haida Gwaii Summer Sessions were offered in May and June of 2018 out of the Haida Heritage Centre. Two programs were offered in the pilot year: Social-Ecological Systems; and Plants, People, and Place (Haida Gwaii Institute, 2019d). Similar to the Haida Gwaii Semester programs, the courses offered through the Summer Sessions are accredited through UBC Faculty of Forestry. Students pay tuition to UBC for the cost of six UBC credits, as well as a \$1600 program fee. In its first year, the two courses were condensed into a three-week period, running Monday to Saturday for the three weeks. Both of these programs were co-taught by local and off-island instructors. The purpose of these programs was two-fold. The first was to offer programming to students who may not want to or be able to make a four-month commitment to take time off of their regular

school courses, as well as offer the opportunity for learners not currently enrolled in university programming to take upper-year university courses. The courses are advertised as being “well suited for undergraduate students in their third or fourth year of a degree, graduate students, and those wishing to continue their studies” (Haida Gwaii Institute, 2019d). The other purpose was to help improve the financial stability of the organization. The semester programs tend to run the HGI at a deficit, and these shorter programs have significantly lower operating costs than full four-month semesters. The first year for the Summer Sessions saw 11 and 8 students enrolled in the two sessions, respectively, with two students participating in both sessions. The success of these programs in the first year prompted the HGI to offer both sessions again in the summer of 2019, which ran in May and June over a slightly less condensed schedule with higher enrollment numbers. The first session had 20 students and the second session had 17 students, with five students participating in both programs.

#### **4.2.5 Current Challenges**

One of the largest challenges that the HGI has faced and will continue to face with program expansion is student accommodation. The HGI will reach out to community members and assemble lists of available accommodations, but finding housing for the term is ultimately the responsibility of the students. Finding suitable 4-month accommodations for students is often difficult to establish, particularly when moving into new communities like the RSS is doing, or finding shorter term housing for students in the new HGI summer terms.

The rental properties for students in these communities is often difficult to establish, especially given that Haida Gwaii is already going through a housing crisis as tourism and Airbnb properties continue to rise (Smart, 2018). As tourism on Haida Gwaii has increased, both in numbers and the length of the tourist season, long-term housing is now in short supply. In 2018,

the Queen Charlotte Heritage Housing Society contracted Co+Host (a facilitators' collective based on Haida Gwaii) to undertake a study to assess the current status of affordable housing in Daajing Giids *Queen Charlotte* and identify housing needs in the immediate and short-term future (Co+Host, 2018). The housing survey indicated that many homes in Daajing Giids *Queen Charlotte* required significant repairs, and that this can be a significant barrier for individuals purchasing homes, since a house that is not move-in-ready will require either expertise or additional expenses (Co+Host, 2018).

Another ongoing challenge is the population constraints of the islands. Because Haida Gwaii is comprised of small rural communities, there is often a lack of capacity in regards to highly qualified personnel to fill specialized roles within organizations such as the HGI. As a result, some positions within the community go unfilled, and other people are stretched across multiple jobs and positions in order to do the work that needs to be done throughout the islands. The HGI brings instructors from off-island partly due to the fact that there are not necessarily the adequately qualified people on Haida Gwaii to teach the courses offered. Offering new programs or opportunities comes with the additional task of finding the appropriate people with the right expertise, a challenge exacerbated by the small population size and geographic isolation.

### **4.3 Synthesis**

Haida Gwaii provides a unique learning environment for students interested in natural resource management, Indigenous governance, and reconciliation. Despite centuries of colonization, the Haida Nation has asserted their sovereignty and independence and continues to be one of the important actors in the fight for Indigenous self-governance. With events such as the stand at Athlii Gwaii, the Kunst'aa Guu – Kunst'aayah reconciliation protocol, and the joint management of Gwaii Haanas, the lands and beings of Haida Gwaii provide many grounded examples of



reconciliation in action. The strides the Haida Nation have made in the last five decades related to governance and environmental management make it a relevant case study for exploring reconciliation and related topics.

The HGHS was originally launched as an economic diversification opportunity for the islands, and has grown into a successful organization offering at least five programs per year to post-secondary students from across the country. As the organization has grown over time, its influence has extended beyond the communities of Hlgaagilda *Skidegate* and Daajing Giids *Queen Charlotte*. With three new programs having launched in the last three years, the HGI is undergoing a significant period of growth and transition. The focus of this research is on the HGI and its activities related to the RSS. However, understanding the broader context in which the organization operates is imperative in order to explore the successes and challenges the program has faced. This includes the history of the organization itself but also the landscape level activities that influence the program in small and large ways. This case study chapter provides a brief history of Haida Gwaii and the HGI so that the following analysis can be adequately grounded in the unique context of the program.

## CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

To understand my methodological choices in more detail, I have decided to be explicit with the direction my research has taken throughout the course of this thesis. Although there are a variety of over-arching methodological frameworks, methodologies, methods and data collection tools that I could have used to explore this topic, I have chosen to use best-practice criteria as an evaluative framework against the Reconciliation Studies Semester (RSS), basing my analysis on conversations, participant observation, and document collection over the two pilot years of the program. This methodology emerged and became the most appropriate strategy given the time, experience, and nature of the context within which I worked.

Working with the Haida Gwaii Institute (HGI) on a research question that was loosely defined from the outset has meant that my methodological approaches have evolved based on the context and needs of the HGI. Throughout my research, I have sought to explore the HGI under the premise that it functions largely as a social innovation. Historical social innovation as a research methodology came out of the textbook *The Evolution of Social Innovation* (Westley et al., 2017) and will be described in more depth in 5.6.4 Social Innovation Tools below. Exploring social innovations often forces the researcher into a tricky situation, navigating “between the flexibility required to understand social innovation, and the rigour necessary in academic inquiry” (McGowan & Westley, 2017, p. 93). All research paradigms and disciplines have their own conventions and methodologies regarded as appropriate or suitable for particular types of inquiry. In my situation, my work has fluctuated and navigated between the realms of program evaluation criteria, semi-structured interviews, personal narrative, and as a result, explores the HGI and the RSS as an example of cross-cultural transformative education and evaluation.

Although ethnographic approaches to research are useful when exploring a culture or group in depth, the intent of my research is to explore post-secondary education focused on reconciliation through the perspective of the HGI, not as an impartial external observer. Because this type of education is relatively novel in the contemporary Canadian context, I wanted to understand what specifically about Haida Gwaii and the HGI made it the space and organization to undertake reconciliation-focused education. Exploring this program as a social innovation has opened up the space to explore actions, dialogue, perceptions, and dynamics across scales to understand how this type of education came into existence, and how the operational context has changed since the program's inception. Throughout this, I have strived to be reflexive when describing my research process, and interpreting my results. Reflexivity, a common approach in Indigenist, feminist, and other critical approaches to research, helps elucidate the perspective and biases that I am bringing to this project and in particular the way I interpret my findings (Kovach, 2009). Furthermore, reflexivity can also be a form of determining the quality of qualitative research, described more below (Creswell, 2014; Kovach, 2009). By structuring this chapter in a narrative format, I hope to convey the evolution of my research process, and the methodological choices I have made.

## **5.1 Laying the Foundation**

Before describing the research process itself, there is an important distinction to be made in terms of two concepts used throughout this chapter: best practice and wise practice. The concept of "best practice" often comes up when examining case studies to determine the methods and techniques that make programs more or less successful (Wesley-Esquimaux & Calliou, 2010). Best practices do not take into account unique events or contexts that may dictate program success, and are often grounded in purely theoretical environments. While the term has been

used extensively in the past when looking at Indigenous community initiatives, the use of “best practice” in the Indigenous literature is declining due to several factors (Wesley-Esquimaux & Calliou, 2010).

For example, the concept “best practice” may favour one ideology over another as to what is best, and the false assumption that what works in one context will have the same level of success across all cultures and contexts (Wesley-Esquimaux & Calliou, 2010). In contrast, wise practice is becoming an increasingly popular term in Indigenous contexts that can mitigate some of the criticisms of the best practice approach. (Wesley-Esquimaux & Calliou, 2010). “Wise practices” moves the definition away from context-independent success, and focuses instead on locally appropriate methods and tools that work well in a particular circumstance (Wesley-Esquimaux & Calliou, 2010). Throughout this chapter, I use best practice to refer to the generic set of criteria for evaluating programs such as the RSS that came out of the literature review. These criteria are not unique to the RSS or the HGI, and can be used to evaluate or analyze any program that is cross-cultural and experiential and explores concepts related to systems thinking and complexity. Wise practice is used when considering the specific applicability of these criteria to the RSS, and whether or not additional information is required to achieve a complete and nuanced understanding of the program.

My research is guided by a constructivist paradigm (Creswell, 2014; Guba & Lincoln, 2005) with elements of the transformative paradigm (Mertens, 2009; Mertens & Hopson, 2006). Constructivist approaches to research are based on the premise that the truth is relative, and that there is no singular truth that the research is trying to find (Baxter & Jack, 2008). In the constructivist paradigm, knowledge is socially-constructed between individuals, and researchers and participants often collaborate with one another (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Positionality is a

critical aspect to the constructivist paradigm, since the knowledge and information created is subjective and related to a particular context (Creswell, 2014; Mertens & Hopson, 2006). The transformative paradigm advocates for participatory approaches that place power and ownership into communities and groups that are vulnerable and oppressed within the dominant societal context (Mertens, 2009). While participatory methods of data collection and analysis can be beneficial, there are still concerns if these methods are used at the insistence or decision of those in power (Mertens, 2009). For this reason, my approach to this research has been guided by ongoing conversations with the HGI. Rather than imposing my own beliefs and ideas about what I thought the most appropriate research objectives and methods would be, I worked with the HGI to come up with a project that both suited their needs as an organization while also satisfying requirements for my Master's degree.

My research design includes the use of qualitative data collection methods. Qualitative research approaches are best used when looking at a particular program or setting in detail (Mertens, 2015). In this case, my research and data collection is specifically focused on the experience of those involved in the RSS on Haida Gwaii. To capture the many perspectives involved, my research methods include a conceptual framework based on a literature review to understand the breadth of knowledge and best practice on the concepts of complexity, social innovation, program evaluation, and critical Indigenous literature, a case study to capture the context of Haida Gwaii and the HGI, as well as participant observation and the development of a narrative. The narrative piece ties back into the best-practice conceptual framework, which provides a theoretically grounded analytical lens with which to explore the RSS.

Qualitative research methods are also increasingly being used in Indigenous contexts because these approaches allow relationships to be valued and considered, which is an important element

in many Indigenous communities and approaches to research (Mertens, 2015). Fundamentally, it is my relationship with the HGI that has allowed me to undertake this research. I have relied on this working relationship with the HGI to inform the direction of this research and provide critical insight on the development and implementation of the program, which I believe has resulted in a more robust research process overall.

### **5.1.1 Community-Based Participatory Research**

*“Universities have elaborate self-regulating structures, and they tend to be slow to change, making them relatively stable partners. In contrast, a community’s dynamic and emergent nature means that its circumstances, needs, and goals, even its boundaries, composition, and leadership can significantly change in a short period of time – one short enough to drastically affect a research engagement”*

Ball, 2014, p. 30.

I came onto this work as part of a larger Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)-funded Insight Grant entitled: “Practicing Reconciliation Through Teaching and Research on Haida Gwaii: A Collaborative Research Project”, led by my supervisor Dr. Daniel McCarthy, and partnered with the HGI and the Haida Gwaii Museum (HGM), as well as researchers from the University of Waterloo, the University of Lethbridge, the University of British Columbia, University of Alberta, and the University of Victoria. When I first applied to The University of Waterloo for my Master’s, Dr. McCarthy informed me about the grant application, and that if the grant was successfully funded that there was a high likelihood that there would be some work that could easily be turned into a master’s thesis. Since I was already familiar with the HGI as an organization, I thought this would be a great opportunity to work with them in a new capacity, and provide some useful outputs for them in the process. I came into this work with the intention to assist the HGI in whatever capacity they needed in getting

their new semester in Reconciliation Studies off the ground in the first couple of years. Initial discussions in Fall 2017, during the first iteration of the RSS, indicated that there were unique concerns being brought up by the students that had not been voiced by students in the other semesters in previous years. In order to adequately capture these concerns, my role was first to help update the existing evaluation materials to be used for the first two years, and then create a more comprehensive evaluation that would be uniquely tailored and created to fit the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the RSS.

This approach to research is commonly known as community-based participatory research (CBPR), also referred to as participatory action research or community-based research. This realm of methodologies are broadly referred to as emancipatory approaches to research because they seek to break down and shift the conventional relationships between researcher and research participants (Raymaker, 2016). CBPR is an approach that is commonly used in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous research circles (Castleden et al., 2012; Easby, 2016; Koster et al., 2012; Leeuw et al., 2012; Stanton, 2014). CBPR is not a data collection tool, but is a methodology and a framework to approaching research with communities (Drawson et al., 2017). CBPR is built on several underlying principles, including community guidance, empowerment, collaboration, co-learning, and mutually beneficial outcomes (Drawson et al., 2017; Koster et al., 2012; Stanton, 2014). Ideally, CBPR should fundamentally recognize that the researcher and the community are fully involved and participate throughout the entire research process (BeLue et al., 2012). In reality, CBPR approaches tend to fall along a spectrum of community involvement, ranging from token participation to community-led research initiatives (Lavallee, 2009).

Broadly, these principles have guided my research approach. Unlike conventional research approaches, which begin by exploring the literature and then developing research questions

based on knowledge, CBPR begins with a community or organization-defined problem (Castleden et al., 2012; Whyte, 1991). This research is the result of ongoing discussions with the HGI after they launched the first semester in Reconciliation Studies. In this case, it was discussions with the HGI that prompted revisiting the existing evaluation materials to make adjustments in order to suit the content and context of the RSS. The literature review and research questions were developed based on these discussions with the HGI, an approach common in CBPR (Castleden et al., 2012; Koster et al., 2012; Minkler, 2005; Whyte, 1991). The staff indicated that they wanted to revamp their evaluation approach for all programs but with a specific focus on tailoring the approach for the RSS.

Since this project was first conceptualized, I have been meeting and discussing with the HGI staff to ensure that the direction of my research will be useful and meaningful for the organization's needs. As well, the development of the evaluation criteria has been broadly informed by the protocols that guide Indigenous-based research. Due to the fact that the RSS takes place within an Indigenous context and discusses issues related to Indigenous people, it is important that my research does not reinforce colonial narratives that have historically been present in mainstream academia and research. Furthermore, I hope to create knowledge that is relevant and contextually appropriate to the HGI based on the context of Haida Gwaii. The literature around transformative education emphasizes the importance of basing knowledge generation on the lived experiences of local people in order to make it meaningful (Dei, 2002). Rather than program evaluation in other contexts operating as the focal point of my research, I have chosen to situate my data collection and analysis within the HGI context. This inductive approach to knowledge generation is another key component of qualitative research (Mertens, 2015). Rather than coming in with a prescribed, rigid structure to my research, the relationship



with the HGI over time created the research project, and my data collection methods and intentions were adjusted as the organization navigated through the pilot years of the RSS.

The CBPR movement challenges the system of surveillance and knowledge control established through mainstream research (Baum, Macdougall, & Smith, 2006, p. 855). CBPR also espouses that action and reflection should occur simultaneously, as opposed to actions being followed by a distinct period of reflection (Baum et al., 2006). This aligns with DE and other alternative evaluation approaches that assert that evaluation should be a continuous and ongoing process as opposed to distinct events within the lifetime of a project or program. Participatory research methodologies have been used as an approach to program evaluations in Indigenous communities both in Canada and the United States. An extensive review of program evaluations in Indigenous communities conducted by Chouinard and Cousins (2007) found that of 15 evaluations undertaken between 1997-2006, all used some form of participatory research methodology, with one explicitly adopting a CBPR approach. These findings seem to suggest that these methods are commonly used in Indigenous contexts, particularly when it pertains to program evaluation.

CPBR is explicitly emancipatory, developed in response to disempowerment in communities, and seeks to ensure that research beneficially impacts communities under study (Raymaker, 2016). In an Indigenous context, CBPR should endeavor to be as community-driven as possible, and the relationships developed should extend beyond the “final outcomes” of the research project itself (Lavallee, 2009). As well, the underlying principles of CBPR can be adapted for particular Indigenous communities and contexts. One example of this is Tribal Participatory Research (TPR), developed by the Indian Family Wellness project for any research undertaken in American Indian and Alaska Native communities in the United States (Fisher & Ball, 2002).

TPR builds on the tenets of CBPR, with the underlying goal of building research capacity within Indigenous communities based on their needs and values (Chouinard & Cousins, 2007; Fisher & Ball, 2002). Although the HGI is not an Indigenous-led organization, the research practices in CBPR are used in Indigenous and cross-cultural contexts and therefore were an appropriate methodological choice.

## **5.2 First Visit: November 28 – December 8, 2017**

### **5.2.1 Participant Observation**

Although at the time I began my research I was not formally basing my data collection around participant observation, the first step in my research was listening to and participating in conference calls and meetings around the RSS and the research project more broadly. Participant observation as a data collection method is most commonly found in ethnography, in which the researcher immerses themselves in the group or community they are working with to participate in the day to day activities and to observe and interview participants (Creswell, 2007). It is also used in narrative and case study research as one form of data collection to capture the lived experience of a single individual or group of people (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2014). When used in tandem with other data collection methods, participant observation is a useful way to compare the actions and behaviour of individuals to their words and actions in more formal settings such as interviews or meetings (Haenfler, 2004).

My participant observation took several forms throughout the course of this research. My initial interaction with HGI program staff took the form of conference calls, in which my role was primarily to take notes and listen to the conversations that took place. In November 2017, I was scheduled to travel out to Haida Gwaii to assist in the “debrief” (end of term evaluation) for the

pilot year for the RSS. Leading up to my departure, I sat in on a call with HGI staff, research partners at the Waterloo Institute for Social Innovation and Resilience (WISIR), and a professional in the field of program evaluation. During these calls we discussed the existing debrief materials and how they could be potentially altered to better reflect the specific content of the RSS. Moreover, the HGI staff wanted to formally capture the concerns and issues that had already been brought up by the students, so new materials were added to the evaluation package. The content and outcomes of these discussions will be discussed in more detail in the Results and Analysis chapter.

In late November 2017, I traveled to Haida Gwaii for the first time since I was a student in the program. During the 11 days that I was there, I attended both debriefs for the two semesters, sat in on a handful of meetings, attended the farewell dinner the RSS students organized to say “thank you” to the community, helped mark the final presentations for the Natural Resource Science semester, and participated in the closing ceremony for the Natural Resource Science semester. I was able to informally chat with the students, listen to the students discuss their experience in the programs, and took notes to facilitate the debrief for the RSS students. For a full list of the meetings I attended and participated in, see Appendix B – Meeting Summary.

The initial intention of this research was to create a program evaluation package for the HGI that would be uniquely tailored to the content of the RSS. However, once I started reading various guidebooks on program evaluation, such as Michael Quinn Patton’s book on developmental evaluation (2010), I realized that creating an entirely new program evaluation in the span of two years with no previous experience or education related to program evaluation was not a feasible deliverable. Around the same time, after reviewing the feedback from the end of term evaluation from the Fall 2017 semester, the HGI staff decided to make some procedural changes while

keeping the overall content and delivery unchanged. These changes included introducing new instructors, and hiring a program coordinator to act as a facilitator between students, instructors, and the HGI (a role that was previously being undertaken by the two seminar instructors). Other concerns voiced by students, including the name “reconciliation studies” and the large reading lists, were left unchanged to see whether or not these procedural fixes helped alleviate some of these larger, epistemological concerns.

### **5.2.2 Research Objectives – Stage 1**

The research objectives, described at the beginning of this thesis, were developed as a result of ongoing discussions with the HGI. Prior to and during the pilot year of the RSS (Fall 2017), the staff expressed an interest in developing evaluation materials that were tailored to the RSS.

Although I realized that I would not be able to actually produce these final materials, I could provide the HGI with some recommendations for future program evaluation that could be preliminarily grounded in the RSS. These recommendations, although sensitive to the HGI context, would largely be based on evidence found in the literature, and potentially other case studies offering similar education, in either format or content. At the end of Stage 1 of my research, my research objectives were the following:

- 1) Develop a set of best-practice criteria for evaluating cross-cultural programming at the post-secondary level through literature and case study evidence;
- 2) Use existing cross-cultural programming as case studies to test the applicability of the criteria; and
- 3) Make recommendations to the HGHEs for evaluating the Reconciliation Studies semester based on literature and case study evidence.

### **5.3 Second Visit: May 7 – May 29, 2018**

In Spring 2018, I spent a month on Haida Gwaii which included a week of meetings to discuss the RSS program, the larger research grant, and my role in both the semester and the research project. I determined that a more manageable deliverable for my thesis was to create a template of “best practice” post-secondary education program evaluation in cross-cultural contexts. Semi-structured interviews would then be conducted to test the applicability of these criteria for the specific context of Haida Gwaii and the RSS. This template would then be adjusted based on the interview results, and presented to the HGI as wise-practice recommendations which they could then use to create new evaluation materials. This process is described in more detail below.

#### **5.3.1 Participant Observation Process**

This second trip to Haida Gwaii took place from May 7, 2018 to May 29, 2018. The purpose of this trip was three-fold. First, we were conducting five days of meetings with the other research partners on the SSHRC Insight Grant. These meetings took place at various locations on Haida Gwaii, and participants included the HGI board of directors, RSS instructors, and other community members involved in the RSS in some capacity. In addition, the research team undertook discussions with students in the high schools in *Uttewas* Masset and *Daaqing Giids* Queen Charlotte to improve the team’s sense of reconciliation efforts and attitudes among Haida Gwaii youth. The purpose of these meetings was to acquaint the other research partners with the context of Haida Gwaii, and to give all partners the chance to collaboratively discuss future research under the grant. As a research team, we were also taken on a tour of several Haida poles, taken on a walk through the forest with a Haida knowledge keeper to talk about medicinal plants, and given a tour of the Haida Gwaii Museum. These were all opportunities to learn more about Haida Gwaii as a place, and to find opportunities to conduct meaningful research that

would be grounded in the communities. My role throughout these meetings was to take notes and make observations, and to compile a final report and series of action items. These included action items for the project team, action items for the HGI broadly and RSS specifically, and action items for future grad students that would work with the academic research partners. One of the most salient action items was to “have a clear set of directions and goals for the HGI (this can be broadly what the HGI hopes to achieve, or an underlying set of principles)”. This action item was largely what informed the interview guide I created, described in more detail in 5.4.1 Intention to Interview.

I also was there in the capacity of a TA for the pilot year for the new 3-week summer term in Social-Ecological Systems. This program was an intensive course load, fitting two university accredited courses into a 3 week span. A total of 12 students from across Canada participated in the two courses, “Social-Ecological Change: An Introduction to Systems Thinking and Resilience”, and “Environment Assessment in Cross-Cultural and Indigenous Contexts”. These courses were co-taught by Dr. Daniel McCarthy, Jisgang *Nika Collison*, and Gaagwiis *Jason Alsop*. I was able to interact with the students on a daily basis, both inside and outside the classroom, and was given the opportunity to give a guest lecture on public participation in environmental assessment.

Finally, throughout the four weeks I was on Haida Gwaii, I continued to meet with HGI staff to discuss matters pertaining to the RSS and collected participant observation data. This period was critical in becoming more familiar with the organization, and understanding how my work could best serve them. The conversations were dynamic and constantly changing following the pilot year of the RSS. It was incredibly beneficial to be able to sit in on weeks of discussions with staff and instructors to get a sense of where the conversations were at in regards to the success of

the program. It was also a chance for me to ask questions to those involved and improve my own understanding of the program, and where there was room for improvement.

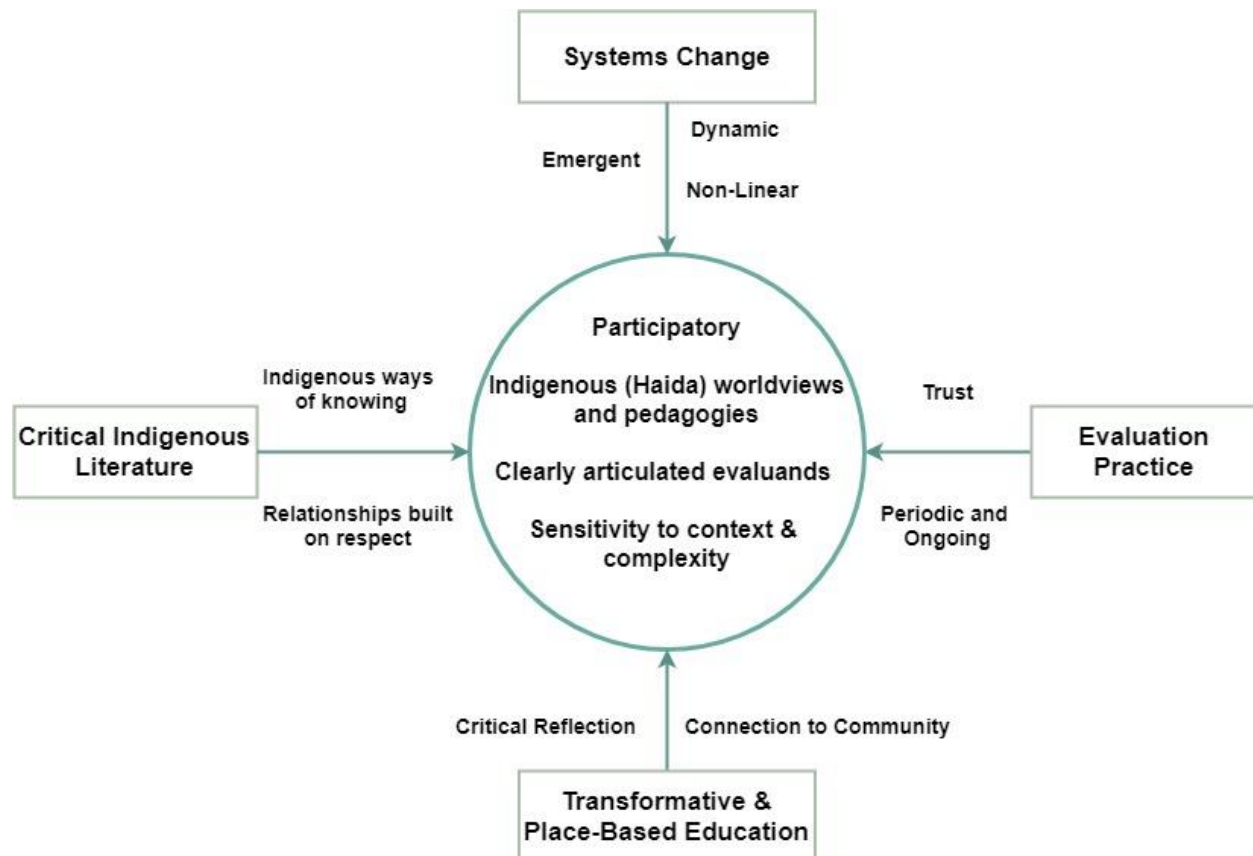
### **5.3.2 Literature Review Development**

An extensive literature review was conducted, focusing on four main areas of research.

Evaluation methodology, systems thinking and complexity, critical Indigenous literature, and transformative and place-based learning pedagogy was synthesized to generate a set of criteria or best principles related to post-secondary, cross-cultural programming. The evaluation literature focused on alternative forms of evaluation, including developmental evaluation, utilization-focused evaluation, and Indigenous approaches to evaluation (Gamble, 2008; Patton, 2010; Ramírez & Brodhead, 2013). Indigenous pedagogy and cross-cultural learning were examined, as well as research related to reconciliation (Battiste, 2002; Davidson-Hunt & O’Flaherty, 2007; LaFrance & Nichols, 2008; McNally, 2004; Merriam & Kim, 2011; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015b). The transformative and place-based education pieces highlighted the pedagogical underpinnings of the HGI, since they advertise and base their semester programs on these teaching methods. This portion of the literature highlighted best practice within the classroom, and the optimal approaches to foster these learning processes. Finally, the systems thinking and complexity literature provided an overall lens with which to view and analyze the HGI at an organizational level. By making the assumption that the HGI is a complex, adaptive system, then certain rules and theories about how to make change within the system can be applied. These tools can not only highlight some of the existing challenges that the HGI are currently facing, but can also be used to anticipate and plan for future problems.

Through the literature review, I qualitatively derived common themes amongst the different threads. Through this process, I developed my final conceptual framework which would serve as

my analytical template for critiquing the RSS. The purpose of this conceptual framework was to provide a set of best practice criteria, based on theoretical literature-based evidence, with which to evaluate the strengths and limitations of the program (see Figure 7 below).



**Figure 7. Conceptual Framework (from Literature Review chapter)**

The evaluation literature provided guidance on a general evaluation approach that makes sense given the context and environment of the HGI. The systems thinking and complexity literature provided further information on how transformative education can take place in cross-cultural contexts. The critical Indigenous research provided a lens in which to understand the importance of conducting research and evaluation in respectful and appropriate ways when working in Indigenous contexts. The four criteria in the centre are the themes that cross literature subjects,



and function as the best-practice criteria that can be applied to any program and evaluation with cross-cultural and transformative education in complex environments. For more information on these criteria, please see the Literature Review or Results and Analysis chapters.

### **5.3.3 Research Objectives – Stage 2**

After traveling to Haida Gwaii for a second time, I determined that the most appropriate course of action would be to more accurately capture the range of perspectives involved in the RSS. Rather than focusing on other programs across Canada and around the world, which all operate in different contexts, I wanted to explore the Haida Gwaii context in more depth. Moving into the Fall of 2018, the objectives of my thesis shifted to the following:

- 1) Develop a set of best-practice criteria for evaluating cross-cultural programming at the post-secondary level through literature evidence;
- 2) Conduct interviews with stakeholders and groups involved with the RSS to capture the interests, intentions, and goals of the program; and
- 3) Create a set of wise-practice recommendations on how to evaluate the RSS based on literature and interview data.

## **5.4 Third Visit: November 10 – December 1, 2018**

### **5.4.1 Intention to Interview**

Prior to heading out to Haida Gwaii for my third visit, I had finished my preliminary work in anticipation of conducting semi-structured interviews. I determined that interviews would be an appropriate data collection given that I wanted to assist with determining some of the goals and objectives, not for the HGI as a whole, but specifically for the RSS. When I first began to work through developing an evaluative framework, the first and largest challenge was determining

what the metrics for success were. Informal conversations with staff, instructors, and students had not yielded a coherent set of answers, so I determined that sit-down interviews would elucidate and tease out some of the concrete outcomes and goals for the program.

Following the direction of previous conversations with HGI staff, I had compiled a list of about a dozen questions that would be asked to HGI staff, instructors, guest lecturers, and community members affiliated with the program. These questions were tailored to elaborate on and contextualize the best-practice conceptual framework I had created through my literature review. This process was also intended to turn the best-practice criteria into a wise-practice set of recommendations that would be uniquely situated to the HGI context. The interview questions tackled the vagaries of program outcomes and goals that were identified when initially looking at developing evaluation materials, and were intended to help determine what a successful program might look like and how to capture and measure that information. In addition, I also intended to ask questions that would provide clarity to the HGI in regards to the program's impact, including the perception of the program by the community, and how to best approach program evaluation in a contextually and culturally appropriate way. I created my interview guide/template, which I reviewed with my supervisor, as well as worked with a consultant in program evaluation to ensure that the flow and wording in my questions were straightforward and would yield the information I was hoping to obtain. Additionally, I had sent the interview guide to the HGI staff prior to arriving on island, with the intention of sitting down to discuss the questions in more detail and ensure everyone was on board prior to reaching out to potential interviewees. See Appendix A for the interview guide that was created at this stage in the research process.

However, once I arrived to Haida Gwaii in November 2018 I ultimately decided to forego these semi-structured for two main reasons. First, the answers I was anticipating to receive from these

questions I had already learned through my ongoing conversations and discussions with HGI staff. Re-capturing information I had already acquired from the HGI staff and instructors placed an additional burden on their already substantial workload. Second, the nature of my project changed during this third trip to Haida Gwaii, in which I was assisting Dr. Daniel McCarthy in teaching his course in the Natural Resource Science semester on Systems Thinking. I traveled to Haida Gwaii with the intention of acting as a course TA, while simultaneously conducting my semi-structured interviews and compiling a list of names for people to speak to about the program. When I arrived on island, I sat down to discuss my research with the HGI staff. They informed me that the students in the second year of the RSS were voicing the same concerns that were rooted in issues more substantive than could be fixed through procedural changes over the course of the eight months between program offerings. For this reason, they had tentatively decided to suspend the program and not offer it in the 2019 fall term. The plan was to conduct a substantial evaluation on the content, delivery, and implementation of the program throughout 2019, with the intention of rolling out two complementary reconciliation studies semesters in 2020-2021 that would operate in the Fall and Winter semesters, respectively. For this reason, the questions I had planned to ask would not benefit the HGI in their program redesign.

#### **5.4.2 Project Change and Rationale**

While I have appreciated the opportunity to work with a community partner on a project that is fluctuating and evolving, this process has not come without challenges. CBPR as a research methodology, like all approaches, has some limitations and does not work in all situations (Leeuw et al., 2012). The discussion on the challenges of CBPR is not particularly prominent, particularly when working in cross-cultural contexts, and this is viewed as a gap in the literature on CBPR as a research methodology (Morton Ninomiya & Pollock, 2017; Stanton, 2014).

Explicitly describing the challenges of working with a community partner may be perceived by the partner as “airing dirty laundry”, or shining a light on aspects of the research that may appear to compromise the integrity of the research. As well, the literature around CBPR does not require researchers to critically reflect on the challenges of these partnerships (Morton Ninomiya & Pollock, 2017). However, for the sake of advancing the conversation on the challenges of community-research partnerships, especially for an early career researcher such as myself, I want to highlight some of the challenges that I have encountered while undertaking this work.

The largest challenge I have encountered is working on two different time frames, particularly in the second year of my research. I had left Haida Gwaii after my third visit with the intention of assisting the HGI in their substantive evaluation. Rather than developing evaluation recommendations on a program that would likely change substantively in the coming years, the focus of my research had shifted at this point to conducting some of the background work, exploring and mapping out the complex landscape the HGI operates within. The recommendations from the literature around program evaluation would still provide useful insight in the future once the program had been revamped and the HGI would be looking to develop the end of term debrief. However, on January 22, 2019 I was on a call with a staff member of the HGI, who informed me that they were hiring a new position, titled “Indigenous and Community Initiatives Manager”. While the specific roles of this person are flexible, they are largely assisting in the deeper evaluation that is now tentatively scheduled before the fall 2020 session is scheduled to start. This clash in timelines is something that is not unique to my research, and often comes up as a challenge for researchers engaging in this type of work (Ball, 2014; Minkler, 2005).

When I came onto this project, I was explicit in saying that I wanted to help the HGI with the implementation of the RSS in whatever capacity would be the most effective. I believe that setting this tone from the onset of the project was important, since communication is an essential piece to a successful research-community relationship (Koster et al., 2012). A failure for all parties to communicate their expectations and commitments to the research project can potentially lead to conflict and misunderstandings across the research team (Koster et al., 2012). As a researcher, it is important to start community based work at the onset with setting up expectations across all parties involved and building relationships (Ball, 2014). Building relationships between researchers and communities takes time, and developing *meaningful* relationships is even more extensive, particularly in cross-cultural contexts (Stanton, 2014). There is a significant amount of time required to set up these relationships, and researchers may underinvest on the amount of time needed to get everyone on the same page (Ball, 2014). The time that is required to be invested may directly conflict with funding or other institutional requirements (Castleden et al., 2012).

Throughout this work, I endeavoured to be receptive to the HGI and the evolution of the RSS, but this must also be balanced with completing my thesis in a timely manner. Student researchers working with community partners are particularly vulnerable to the dynamism and evolution inherent in this realm of work (Ball, 2014). Our own work can be significantly delayed and altered by these changes, which can cause direct conflict with thesis or project submission deadlines required by scholarship funding, or faculty regulations (Ball, 2014).

The desire to work with small community partners also presents a capacity challenge (Stanton, 2014). One of the biggest drawbacks to CBPR is the level of involvement required, particularly in communities that are already overwhelmed and overburdened (Leeuw et al., 2012). In the case

of the HGI, they are a full time staff of six people, with about 15-20 part-time instructors. The staff members already take on many roles, and creating additional work was difficult to suggest as a student researcher. However, the intention not to overburden the community partner must be balanced with capturing an adequate level of participant involvement, particularly if I wanted to understand the complexity of the HGI (Stanton, 2014). Within the HGI, some of the staff which are the most involved with the RSS are also in charge of many other projects and programs and therefore are not necessarily always available for regular phone calls and check-ins (Minkler, 2005). This desire not to overburden the HGI was one of the reasons I moved away from interviews as my primary data collection method. The answers I anticipated to hear from my research questions were all opinions and notions that I had heard through the conversations and discussions I had partaken in with HGI staff and instructors over the year and a half I had been working with them. Rather than asking everyone to reiterate the information they had already provided me, I chose instead to frame this data collection as participant observation. This approach required me to not use direct quotes from my participants to avoid ethical violations, and instead frame my data analysis as a single narrative that I have created based on two years of data collection and synthesis.

Finally, another challenge with CBPR approaches is how to deal with or release results that may be unflattering (Minkler, 2005). This is one area that I am unsure about in terms of moving forward and eventually publishing my results. The HGI has indicated that before anything is published, they would like to be able to look at it and decide whether or not they are comfortable with it being released. This aligns with the tenets of OCAP in regards to who owns and controls the data (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2014). While I do want to ensure that I am being respectful to the HGI, I also want to be able to demonstrate that I have thought

critically about my research and have looked at the organization from all angles. This will be something that will continue to evolve as I finish up this work and move forward with publishing.

### **5.4.3 Participant Observation**

November 10, 2018 to December 1, 2018 was my third trip to Haida Gwaii. During this trip, I was the TA for the final course of the Natural Resource Science semester (Systems Thinking for Resource Management) being taught by Dr. Daniel McCarthy. At this point, I was also planning to begin conducting semi-structured interviews. Although this did not take place, I still sat in on meetings with HGI staff, and interacted with the students from both semesters. One of the days of the course was devoted to bringing both groups of students together to work together on issues related to resource management in cross-cultural and Indigenous contexts. This session presented an opportunity to chat with some of the RSS students more informally, as well as see how these two groups of students worked together while coming from two very different semester programs under the same organization. It was at this time I began to formally reflect on participant observation as my primary data collection process. The tenets of ethical practices within ethnography align with the work undertaken as a community-based research methodology. These include aspects of reciprocity and respect, and being critically conscious of who is in control and ownership of the data (Creswell, 2007). Using participant observation would allow me to reflect more generally on the RSS as a whole and provide my own perspective on what I perceived the strengths and weaknesses of the program to be.

### **5.5 Additional Trips to Haida Gwaii**

I took two more trips to Haida Gwaii following my third visit: May 2-30, 2019 and November 2-30, 2019. On these two visits, I primarily acted in a TA role, assisting Dr. Daniel McCarthy in

teaching “Social-Ecological Change: An Introduction to Systems Thinking and Resilience”, and “Environment Assessment in Cross-Cultural and Indigenous Contexts” in the Summer Session and “Systems Thinking for Resource Management” in the fall Natural Resource Science semester. During these trips, I continued to meet with HGI staff both formally and informally. The purpose of the formal meetings was to provide updates and progress reports on my thesis. Specifically, on November 28, 2019 I sat down with HGI staff and presented my preliminary findings and analysis of my thesis, discussed which components of my thesis could be used for promotional and information purposes, and identified next steps in completing the research.

## **5.6 Final Approach**

My final research objectives are as follows:

- 3) Develop a best-practice framework for program evaluation of transformative education in cross-cultural and complex contexts; and,
- 4) Evaluate the RSS and the HGI against these best-practice criteria and provide wise-practice recommendations.

### **5.6.1 Participant Observation and Document Review**

Throughout the two and a half years I worked with the HGI, I took five separate visits to Haida Gwaii, for a total of four and a half months spent on the islands. I participated in 22 meetings during this time, the majority of which took place in person during my trips to Haida Gwaii. A full list of these meetings can be found in Appendix B – Meeting Summary. During these meetings, my role was to record the conversations, summarize themes and action items, and disseminate meeting notes to the other parties involved. The topics of these meetings ranged from specific activities pertaining to the RSS and program evaluation, to broader research goals



of the HGI and the SSHRC Insight Grant, to future initiatives and programs of the HGI. These meetings generated significant insight into the structure and organization of the HGI. Moreover, I was able to access files, meeting notes, and other documents related to the HGI dating back to 2013. I focused my search on files related to the development of the RSS, exploring promotional materials and notes related to the planning phases of the RSS in 2015. In addition, I reviewed strategic documents of the HGI to better understand the trajectory of the organization and its evolution over time. This document review intended to primarily provide background information on the HGI and the activities which took place during the planning stages of the RSS. This background information was then used to develop a case study, a multiscale timeline of important events, and several rich pictures, described in the following sections below.

### **5.6.2 Case Study**

*“Case studies are considered best for capturing results of programs that are community-driven and designed.”*

Johnston, 2013, p. 30

In order to sufficiently understand the context of the HGI, I chose to first devote a chapter to a case study, both of Haida Gwaii and the HGI. Haida Gwaii has a rich history related to Indigenous sovereignty and reconciliation (see for example (Collison, 2018)), and I believe that understanding the context of Haida Gwaii is essential to appreciating the fact that the RSS takes place on Haida Gwaii. The description of Haida Gwaii is based on both Western and Haida academic sources, as well as news articles and other publicly available documents. The HGI portion of the case study is partly based on the HGI website and some public documents and reports, but is largely from my own knowledge and conversations I have had with HGI staff and

board members. This portion of the case study has been reviewed by HGI staff to ensure I have captured their history and origins appropriately and accurately.

A case study can be used as a methodology, a research strategy, a research design, or a research product (Creswell, 2007). In my research, I am using case study as a methodology in addition to a product. I am looking at the HGI as a case study because I want to understand the specific context of the RSS as well as delve deeper into *why* the RSS as a program may or may not be successful (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The context here is particularly important because of the unique nature of the program. Although other universities and schools may be offering courses and programs on reconciliation, the approach of the HGI program does not appear to be occurring anywhere else. For this reason, it is important to explicitly and clearly describe the context of this program in order to be able to understand the complexity surrounding this program (Baxter & Jack, 2008). My case study specifically looks at the RSS and its place within the HGI. I am not focusing my case study on the other programs offered by the HGI, such as the Natural Resource Science semester, but these programs have provided additional insight into the structure of the HGI overall.

Within the field of case study research, there are several different types that are used depending on the questions and phenomena under study (Baxter & Jack, 2008). I took on a descriptive case study approach, in which I am exploring both a phenomenon *and* its context (Yin, 2014). As well, I am not using my case study to make generalizations, but I am looking at the particularities of the HGI context (Stake, 1995). I wanted to improve my understanding of the HGI as an organization and the context in which it operates, which is the intrinsic approach to case study research (Stake, 1995). One of the benefits to case study research is that it can combine both quantitative and qualitative data (Eisenhardt, 1989). For example, Yin (2014) states that some

common data collection methods for case study research are document reviews and participant observations, as well as interviews and archival records. Although I have not conducted formal interviews, the conversations I had with HGI staff provided more information than would have been possible through participant observation and document reviews alone. Both case study and narrative approaches to qualitative research rely on multiple sources of data (Creswell, 2007).

### **5.6.3 Multiscale Timeline Exercise**

Erin Alexiuk, a current PhD candidate with WISIR, was involved heavily in the design phases of the RSS. Part of the work she had undertaken was creating a multi-scale timeline of the HGI in the years leading up to the creation of the RSS. This timeline explored 2013-2015 and events happening at the individual, HGI, Haida Gwaii, provincial and national scales. As the HGI and I sifted through the materials that had been collected over the six years that Erin had been working with the HGI, the organization identified that they were interested in updating the timeline to reflect up to the 2018 context of the organization. I expanded the timeline in both directions, briefly describing the context of the HGI from its origins in 2008 to the present day in 2018. Since the focus of my research is on the RSS, I decided to focus my own work and analysis on the time period from 2015-2018, which have been the main years of the program.

Assembling this timeline occurred simultaneously as I drafted my Case Study chapter of my thesis, and developing the timeline also assisted in my understanding of the initial conditions under which the RSS was created. Developing this timeline for the RSS served as a useful analytical tool for my own understanding, as I explored significant events happening at several scales during the years of program development and implementation. The purpose of the multi-scale timeline was to illustrate what other contextual elements were happening throughout the planning and development stages that may have influenced program design, evolution, and

uptake by students and the wider community. Developing this timeline allowed me to include additional pieces of information in the Case Study chapter, both about the HGI and the wider Haida Gwaii community. This work acted as a skeleton template in the development of the rich pictures, described in more detail in 5.6.5 Rich Pictures as Data Analysis.

#### **5.6.4 Social Innovation Tools**

Social innovation, described in more detail in the Literature Review chapter, was my initial analytical lens. Based on the work of Westley and others in their case studies of historical social innovation (Westley et al., 2017), I employed similar tactics in analyzing how activities at various scales might influence program and organizational activities. Using the WISIR definition of a social innovation: “a process, program, policy, product or design that fundamentally shifts values, authority and resource flows in the system which created the problem in the first place” (McGowan & Westley, 2017, p. 96), I explored how interactions across system scales might have influenced activities at the scale of the RSS. A criticism of the some social innovation research is that researchers are more keen to create their own explanation to phenomena or to describe system change than they are to validate or test existing theories in the field (McGowan & Westley, 2017). In my work, I am using the methodology and theory created in *The Evolution of Social Innovation* to determine its applicability as an analytical tool for the RSS and the HGI context. The intent of this work is not to validate the framework per se, but is to explore the utility of this approach in assisting organizations undertaking program evaluation.

Part of the reason for using this approach is that the program was originally created with significant input from Haida knowledge keepers as well as off-island curriculum developers (see the Case Study chapter for a more in-depth description of the development of the RSS). There were multiple iterations of curriculum development to ensure that the courses adequately

reflected the most important themes of what students were expected to learn in a program exploring reconciliation and decolonization. Despite these intentions and steps taken to ensure quality programming, the HGI heard concerns from students and community members in both program years that were not originally anticipated. Despite procedural fixes, after two years of offering the program the HGI was still hearing similar concerns from students that could not be easily fixed or understood in the eight months between program offerings. There may be ideas, developments, and attitudes happening adjacent to the program that influence its evolution and development (McGowan & Westley, 2017). Mapping these innovations out diagrammatically at multiple scales can highlight these adjacent activities that may be influencing the program in ways that were unanticipated at its creation. As well, visually mapping out the evolution of the program highlighted periods of data or specific details that may have been missed or discounted as extraneous to the program (McGowan & Westley, 2017). By positing that the HGI and RSS are functioning as a social innovation, then the tools developed in *The Evolution of Social Innovation* can be applied to explore the utility of these concepts in program evaluation. Visualizing the social innovation opened up the scale of analysis by examining landscape level influences and placing the program and its activities in a broader context.

### **5.6.5 Rich Pictures as Data Analysis**

Based on the data collected in the case study and timeline exercise, and through the lens of social innovation, I created four rich pictures describing some relevant or contextually important events over the timeline of the RSS. I wanted to explicitly and comprehensively capture the different periods of the RSS, which were examined at several different scales, from the level of individual actors involved in the RSS and the HGI, all the way up to national and international events (Figure 8).



**Figure 8. Scales of Analysis for Rich Pictures. The focal scale for analysis is the Reconciliation Studies Semester (RSS) and the Haida Gwaii Institute (HGI). The macro scale includes activities at the international, national, provincial, and Haida Gwaii levels. The micro level focuses on individuals within the HGI involved in the operations pertaining to the RSS.**

Based on social innovation concepts, these rich pictures capture multiple levels of scale.

Beginning at the microscale of individuals working within the HGI, this level explores how changes in personnel and staffing may have influenced program uptake and design (Westley, McGowan, Antadza, Blacklock, & Tjornbo, 2016). Moving up into the meso-scale, exploring the RSS and HGI, this is the “problem domain” of the research and the main focus of my analysis (Westley et al., 2016). Finally, the larger scales, from the Haida Gwaii region to activities in the province of British Columbia and across Canada, explore how large events at these scales may have had an influence on the evolution of the program and organization (Westley et al., 2016).

The rich pictures described some factors which may have influenced program design and uptake, which informed the subsequent data analysis of program strengths and weaknesses. Secondly, these pictures will support the HGI as they move into the re-design of the RSS in the latter half of 2019. The original impetus for this type of analysis was a series of conversations in the fall of

2018 when the HGI were determining next steps for the RSS. One aspect of the program they were interested in exploring was some of the larger contextual pieces that may influence the program and its operations, which in turn might explain some of the challenges that were previously unforeseen by program staff. These pictures are not intended to be a cumulative record of the events that took place during these time periods. Instead, the goal of these pictures was to describe some moments that were identified by HGI staff as potentially relevant, or were flagged in local Haida Gwaii media as important at the regional level.

To simplify these rich pictures, I broke them down into the four years identified as relevant to the RSS. The 2015 time period was the phase of initial program development, with community meetings, the hiring of curriculum developers and the start of the SSHRC Insight grant all taking place. This era is important because the sociopolitical context at the time should have influenced the direction and intention of the program moving forward. It also provides somewhat of a “baseline” with which to compare the two pilot years of the program against, particularly when looking at how discussions on reconciliation and decolonization have shifted and evolved.

Although it was not initially going to be included in the analysis, after discussions in May 2019 with HGI program staff, I determined that the 2016 year was particularly important in understanding the way the program continued to evolve after it was initially developed. There was a relative dearth of information surrounding the activities in the 2016 year of the HGI, described in more detail in the Case Study and Results and Analysis chapters of this thesis. There were significant questions raised about HGI activities related to the RSS in this time period, particularly in regards to community consultation and engagement. As the result of these uncertainties, the 2016 year was included in the rich picture analysis.

Finally, the two program years, 2017 and 2018, display how the program actually functioned in practice and what changes took place between the planning and implementation of the program. In particular, the similarities and differences between program years at all scales of analysis are important to explore in regards to how changes made between program years may or may not have influenced overall program success. After developing four rich pictures for each of the relevant program years, I created a high-level summary picture, including the most significant events and hypothesizing possible linkages across spatial and temporal scales. This final rich picture serves to supplement discussions around the impacts the context had on the successes and opportunities for improvement related to the RSS. These rich pictures can be found in the Results and Analysis chapter of this thesis.

As part of this data analysis, I sought to be mindful of how much I interpreted changes from year to year and how these may have impacted the relative success of the program in each of the pilot years. I did not want to run the risk of apophenia, or assuming linkages and connections that do not exist (S. Bell, Berg, & Morse, 2019). To minimize the likelihood of this occurring, I limited my analysis to documents, news articles, and organization-related events that I feel may be relevant to the HGI in reference to the RSS. My hope is that after the completion of my thesis, I can continue to work with the HGI in future program design. As part of this, I produced the preliminary multiscale timeline with portions of analysis. I then provided this work to the HGI, which they are now able to use and add to for their own analysis. Since they are much more familiar with the students, the context of the classroom and the greater community, they will be more informed to identify linkages and relationships between various actors and system dynamics to serve the purpose of program redesign moving forward.



I have used the perspective of the HGI as a single unit in constructing this narrative. Although it would have been beneficial to bring in other groups, such as students, instructors, and community members, given the evolution of the RSS and the broader SSHRC project as well as the need to complete my thesis in a timely fashion, it was no longer a feasible expectation. However, if the HGI determine that they would like to capture more perspectives in their analysis, they can use the rich pictures I have provided as a launch point to continue these conversations across stakeholder and interest groups. Following each generic rich picture description, I have provided a short summary of the activities of that particular year and presented some possible influences they would have on the program and organization as a whole.

#### **5.6.6 Data Analysis**

My data analysis took the primary form of a content analysis, exploring strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement of the program based on the best-practice criteria that came out of the literature review and conceptual framework, leading to wise-practice recommendations that were grounded in the reality of the HGI experience (see Literature Review chapter for the conceptual framework). The years pertaining to the RSS (2015-2018) have been outlined by the rich pictures (found in the Results and Analysis chapter) in terms of processes, actions, and activities that took place. The activities at the program and organizational levels were then compared to the four best-practice criteria to highlight successes and areas for improvement within the HGI. The final synthesis is an analysis of these strengths and opportunities against the particular context of events within and outside the boundaries of the HGI. This serves to highlight the interplay between “best practice” and “wise practice” – what the theoretical literature describes as optimal and what actually works on the ground and in the particular context.

### **5.6.7 Ensuring Quality**

Throughout this research process, I have considered how to measure the overall quality of my data and findings. Important to note is that any criteria for evaluating trustworthiness should be established as part of the overall study process, rather than simply post hoc, in order for this self-correction and regulation to occur throughout the research (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002). To assess the quality of my research, I have chosen to use Tracy's "big tent" criteria (Tracy, 2010). This framework was created without one particular ontology or epistemology or field of qualitative research in mind, and are framed not around particular methods but instead around the goals of qualitative approaches to research (Tracy, 2010). The eight criteria identified by Tracy (2010) are: worthy topic, rich rigour, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethics, and meaningful coherence.

Rigour is a word commonly used when discussing the validity of research, particularly in quantitative research (Bochner, 2018). This word is contested amongst qualitative researchers, in determining what constitutes rigour and whether or not it is the right word to read when describing qualitative research (Bochner, 2018; Elo et al., 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Morse et al., 2002; Shenton, 2004). Although some scholars disagree with the use of "rigour" in qualitative research (Bochner, 2018), Tracy uses rich rigour as just one of eight components to be considered when examining the quality of research (2010). Rigour, although a necessary component to quality in research, is not sufficient on its own for determining whether or not qualitative research is high quality work (Tracy, 2010). Rich rigour in qualitative research can be achieved through the use of multiple theories and approaches, as well as a sufficient amount of data (Tracy, 2010). Where new or rare phenomena are being studied, the data may be sparse. To combat this, it is important to explicitly describe the data analysis process, including how the

data was compiled, organized and transformed into its final form (Tracy, 2010). Throughout this chapter, I have strived to be as explicit as possible in my data collection process, to demonstrate an acceptable level of rigour.

A worthy topic in qualitative research reflects larger contextual importance or significance, or is personally compelling (Tracy, 2010). Worthy research should explore new ideas and challenge dominant ones, as opposed to merely exploring already well-understood phenomena (Tracy, 2010). My research is exploring the HGI, an organization that has not been studied extensively or researched in depth before. As well, the impact and significance of reconciliation, particularly on Haida Gwaii, is not yet understood, and this program and its implications will be shaped by ongoing discussions surrounding Indigenous rights and reconciliation both on Haida Gwaii and across the country.

To address sincerity, I have chosen to describe my personal experience and perspectives, and how these have shifted as I have undertaken this work, in this chapter. Doing this is a form of self-reflexivity, in an effort to be honest and open about my biases, experiences and opinions and how these may have shaped the overall findings of my thesis (Tracy, 2010). By describing the route my research has taken, including all the twists and turns, I have endeavoured to increase the transparency of my research by being honest about the research process itself (Tracy, 2010). By formatting my Methodology and Methods chapter as a narrative, describing this evolution, it is my intention that the final outcomes and methods I am using become clear and understandable.

Credibility is one of the largest components to determining the quality of qualitative research, and is compared to the metric of internal validity in quantitative research (Guba, 1981).

Credibility strives to determine whether or not the conclusions I draw from my research are

believable and legitimate. I have ensured the credibility of my research through two main approaches: member reflection, and crystallization.

To ensure that the rich pictures I have developed capture the perspective of the HGI in addition to my own, I have provided these summaries to the HGI to allow them to analyze them and reflect on my findings. The organization may have a different recollection of the context and events, so allowing them to review the findings allows for their perspectives to be captured in the final analysis. This process of member reflection, an alternative to member checking, has allowed for the data analysis to be more collaborative and also opened up the space to illuminate new findings (Tracy, 2010). Member checking is more often used when trying to capture an accurate picture of the “truth” (Guba, 1981; Tracy, 2010). Rather than trying to determine whether or not the “truth” of the situation has been captured, which member checks tend to imply, member reflection allows the research team the opportunity to determine whether or not the findings will be relevant and useful to the HGI in the future, and if the events of the organization have been captured accurately from multiple perspectives and understandings (Tracy, 2010). Occurring prior to, and during data analysis, member reflection processes has assisted in validating my data interpretation, and aligns with the tenets of CBPR by collaboratively producing and reviewing the data (Minkler, Vásquez, Tajik, & Petersen, 2008). Although some scholars caution against relying on member checking as a validation strategy (Elo et al., 2014), I want to confirm that my findings accurately represent the HGI beyond my own biases and perspective.

Crystallization, like member reflection, has analogous roots to historical and mainstream approaches of qualitative inquiry, with triangulation being the commonly used term (Tracy, 2010). Triangulation can take many forms, including the use of multiple research methods and

ways of collecting data, or interviewing and collecting data from a range of participants (Shenton, 2004). Throughout my data collection process, I have spoken to a variety of stakeholders involved in the HGI, including staff members, the Board of Directors, instructors, and community educators. Although all participants are involved in the HGI in some capacity, they have had different experiences and perceptions of the program and the organization.

Crystallization is an appropriate method to use here because, rather than assuming there is a singular truth at the heart of the issue that can be uncovered through multiple sources of data and methods, the use of multiple methods and data sources supports a more in-depth, complex picture of the phenomenon under study (Tracy, 2010). Credibility also can involve prolonged and persistent engagement between the researcher and the participants prior to and throughout the data collection (Mertens, 2015; Shenton, 2004). This engagement can come in the form of the researcher developing “an early familiarity with the culture” of the group or organization they are working with (Shenton, 2004, p. 65). In the context of my own research, I have been familiar with the HGI for four years, since I participated in the Natural Resource Science semester in the fall of 2015. Since then, I have returned to Haida Gwaii five times, working with staff and instructors affiliated with the organization to shape my research. Not only has this improved the credibility of my research, but it has also helped to ensure that the results of my work have direct and tangible benefits to the HGI, who are both the recipients and participants of my research.

Resonant research is able to evoke something in its readers, and produces findings that are transferable or generalizable in some way (Tracy, 2010). This may involve reducing the amount of technical jargon to make it a more aesthetically pleasing read, or providing sufficient detail so the reader can make generalizations (Tracy, 2010). Since qualitative research is often contextually dependent both spatially and temporally, there is only a limited amount of

hypothesising about future situations that can reasonably occur (Tracy, 2010). One aspect of resonance that is found in most criteria on quality research is transferability (Shenton, 2004; Tracy, 2010). Rather than trying to formally generalize research findings, transferability focuses on providing personal knowledge and experiences in the report to assist in reader comprehension of the research, which in turn equips the reader to determine what aspects can be applied to their particular situation (Tracy, 2010). I have used personal stories and insights throughout my thesis to describe my process, in the hopes that future readers will be able to read this work and make inferences and transfer the findings across contexts.

Meaningful qualitative research should advance some aspect of research and make some sort of significant contribution. This may be advancing a theory by applying it in a new context, encouraging people to undertake more research, empowering readers to take action, or advancing a particular methodological approach (Tracy, 2010). I believe that my research has practical significance, because my findings will directly be provided to the HGI to help them move through some of the stuck points in achieving program success with the RSS. Moreover, the use of social innovation concepts in assisting with program evaluation has not been extensively applied. The use of social innovation tools in this way is novel and may advance the literature on the application of these concepts in practice.

Ethics in qualitative research are both a means to achieving successful quality, and also an end goal to qualitative research (Tracy, 2010). There are a range of ethical practices in qualitative research, including institutional requirements, relational ethics to community and research partners, situational ethics for the particular research context, and exiting ethics for once my research is complete and I intend to share and disseminate my research (Tracy, 2010). I have met the institutional requirements set out by the University of Waterloo for ethics. My work is

covered under the larger SSHRC Insight Grant, and I have not conducted any formal interviews that would require additional institutional ethics requirements. Relational ethics has been addressed through member reflection and the ongoing discussions with the HGI through the data collection, analysis, and writing phases of this work. Moreover, all portions of this thesis have been provided to the HGI to review, edit, and change if they feel that my work does not accurately capture any component of the program or its context. Any work that I have undertaken with the HGI outside the scope of my thesis will continue to occur until completion to assist in this relational accountability between myself and the organization.

Finally, qualitative research should do what it has set out to do, using appropriate methods and grounding methods and finding in the literature (Tracy, 2010). The goal or intention of the research should match the way in which it is presented, and there should be interconnectedness between the literature, the data, and the discussion (Tracy, 2010). To demonstrate the coherence of this research, I have explicitly described the process and how the final methodological choices came together. I have strived to describe the literature foundations that underpin the HGI in terms of their programs and pedagogies, and have linked my findings back to this literature. Meaningful coherence does not mean that the research has to only follow one approach or paradigmatic concepts, but that the choices make sense given the particular research context (Tracy, 2010). Although these criteria for quality may not all be achieved to the same degree in practice, it is important to consider how much my work touches on each of these eight points. I appreciate Tracy's criteria because they do not assume researchers must all come from the same onto-epistemology in order to agree on what comprises good qualitative research (Tracy, 2010). Outside of Tracy's criteria, there are more conventional methods for assessing the quality of my research in ways analogous to quantitative measures of validity (Elo et al., 2014; Morse et al.,

2002). First formally developed by Guba (1981), there are four main criteria commonly used to assess quality (or trustworthiness), each of the which having direct links and related terms within quantitative research: credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004). Mertens (2015) expanded these four criteria to also consider measures of quality within transformative research. The transformative criterion is used most often when the research in question involves elements of social justice and is driven by change (Mertens, 2015). There are several components that fall within transformative criteria for trustworthiness. In my research, I have focused primarily on attention to voice and positionality (Mertens, 2015). Since I am a non-Indigenous researcher working in a cross-cultural context that I am relatively unfamiliar with, I am aware that my own personal biases and experiences have shaped and will continue to shape the way I think about and analyze this research. It is not my intention to provide an unbiased account of the HGI landscape, but instead to provide my perspective while being transparent about the lens I have. To alleviate or offset this bias, I have worked with the HGI to collaboratively determine ways in which my final analysis both meets their organizational needs and represents the environment within which their program operates.



## **5.7 Synthesis**

This research began with the intention of supporting the HGI in whatever capacity required as they piloted the RSS. Over the past two years, the focus of my work has shifted from developing specific evaluation materials, to evaluating the RSS and its evaluation against a theoretical framework of best practice. This evaluation was then contextualized against the reality of offering this type of programming on Haida Gwaii, and turned into a final set of wise-practice recommendations that can be used by the HGI in future iterations of all of their programs.

Through two years of participant observation, the development of a comprehensive case study, and a document review spanning eight years of information, I have compiled data to explore the RSS and the HGI as a whole. Through describing this program and the complex, dynamic system in which it operates, I have sought to capture the reality of the RSS and its context to better understand the successes and opportunities for improvement of the program. By working collaboratively with the HGI throughout this process, my work has continued to be meaningful to the organization and will provide tangible benefits as they redesign the RSS and other future programs.

## **CHAPTER SIX: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to satisfy Objective 2 of this thesis: evaluate the Reconciliation Studies Semester (RSS) and the Haida Gwaii Institute (HGI) against the best-practice criteria (from the literature review) and provide wise-practice recommendations. Through working with the HGI for the duration of piloting the RSS, I have been granted insight into the program and its broader context. Exploring the program and its landscape has allowed cross-scale dynamics to become more apparent, a central tenet to social innovation (Moore, 2017). This concept, described in the Literature Review chapter, postulates that successful social innovations are the result of interactions across scales ranging from individual actors to landscape level events (McGowan et al., 2017). This idea is illustrated when exploring the evolution of the RSS over time, as individuals within the HGI and beyond came together in 2015 to develop a program about reconciliation. These events occurred simultaneously to large, landscape-level conversations about reconciliation at the national level as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) released their report and calls to action. The analysis in this chapter utilizes cross-scale dynamics by exploring events at various scales and hypothesizing linkages to the events of the RSS specifically.

Using social innovation concepts to analyze the HGI is beneficial since the organization can be described as a complex adaptive system (CAS). CAS theory is also described in the Literature Review chapter as a concept in itself, as well as a central component to social innovation theory (Westley & Laban, 2012). By thinking about the HGI as a CAS, organizational learning can take place through dialogue and descriptions of the past, present, and future directions (Boal &

Schultz, 2007). Drawing on past experience can build knowledge about the strengths and weaknesses of the organization, but this must be balanced with critically examining the current and future trajectory to avoid complacency of those involved (Boal & Schultz, 2007). As well, critical reflection can help guide the future direction of the organization “without being paralyzed by uncertainty or fragmented in disorder” (Boal & Schultz, 2007, p. 413). Exploring the HGI in this way may illuminate some of the challenges and impediments to program success that may be outside of the conventional sphere of influence. Since the HGI is impacted by actions and activities at higher and lower scales, understanding multi-scalar system dynamics is important in understanding the full picture. Although the HGI has over ten years of history on Haida Gwaii, I have focused my findings and analysis on the years pertaining to the RSS, 2015-2018. I have, however, chosen to include a history of the HGI in the Case Study chapter of this thesis to ensure I understand the starting conditions and path-dependence of this system. The best practice principle from the conceptual framework, “Sensitivity to Context and Complexity” seeks to capture the ideas of cross-scale dynamics, CAS, and the starting conditions of the RSS as a system.

When categorizing the RSS as a social innovation, it is also important to explore the context the program operated within. The attitudes, ideas, and activities happening adjacent to a social innovation may exert significant influence on its development without being immediately obvious at first glance (McGowan & Westley, 2017). A concept central to social innovation theory is “prophetic starting conditions”, described in more detail in the Literature Review chapter, in which the initial conditions of an innovation may influence the development or path of an innovation (Westley et al., 2017). Understanding the context and environment under which an innovation first developed may yield insights into its evolution over time (Westley et al.,

2017). A person examining the programming offered by the HGI may not understand some of the organizational principles and practices when looking at the programs in isolation of their history. For this reason, I have spoken to board members and present and former staff of the HGI in an attempt to capture some of the initial pieces that acted as the catalyst for the creation of the organization. The starting conditions also may create path dependence, a concept which describes an organization or system's propensity to exhibit consistent behaviour over time (Ramalingam et al., 2008; Westley et al., 2017). Furthermore, when exploring the RSS and its path dependence, the conditions that existed during the initial conceptualization of the program may yield insights as to how the program took shape in the implementation years and what the impact of the initial context was for final program design.

The first section of this chapter will summarize major events in the years of the RSS. The second section of analysis contextualizes program strengths and weaknesses, based on the best practice framework created from the Literature Review chapter.

## **6.2 Program Summaries**

The following sections will break down the activities of the HGI as they pertain specifically to the RSS. This data was compiled through conversations with HGI staff, meeting notes, strategic plans, schedules, internal documents and participant observation over the two years I have been working with the HGI as a graduate student. These summaries have been provided to the HGI to review prior to the final submission of this thesis to ensure the credibility of these findings.

Although the analysis is my own, I want to ensure I have depicted the HGI in a way that reflects both my and their perceptions of their organization.

In addition, I have also included synopses of events that took place on Haida Gwaii during this time, as well as at the provincial and national scales, to contextualize the activities of the HGI in the broader context. These events are not a comprehensive list, but are some elements that may have influenced the perception and uptake of the program. These events were determined through ongoing conversations, a collective exercise creating a multi-scale timeline, the 2018 book “Athlii Gwaii: Upholding Haida Law on Lyell Island” and Haida Laas articles (the newsletter of The Council of The Haida Nation). The Athlii Gwaii book provides a timeline chronicling the events surrounding the stand at Athlii Gwaii, and mentions some events that have happened in the decades following the standoff that have important significance for the Haida Nation.

The major national events described below were chosen as the result of the timeline exercise, and are not intended to be an exhaustive list of important news stories related to reconciliation throughout the four years of program operations. Without speculating on the magnitude or scale of influence, it is important to map out the landscape of significant news stories and articles occurring at each stage in the RSS process. Since the HGI operates in a dynamic landscape, it is imperative to understand some of the significant events taking place throughout the planning and implementation of the RSS to draw linkages between the program and its broader context.



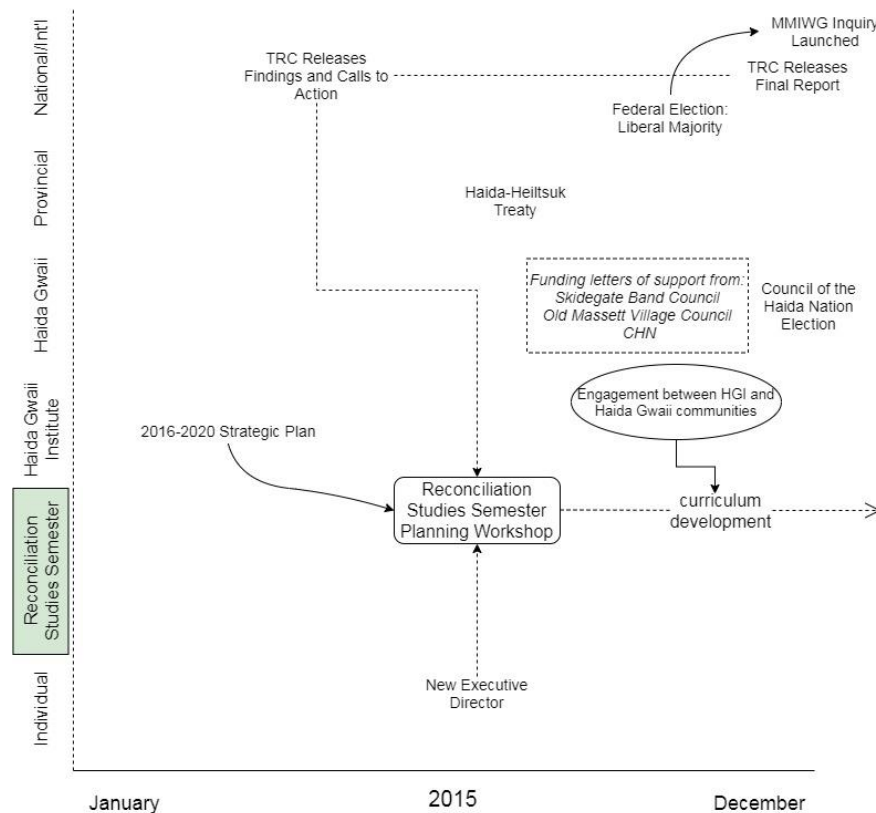
**Figure 9. Scalar diagram. The focal scale for analysis is the Reconciliation Studies Semester (RSS) and the Haida Gwaii Institute (HGI). The macro scale includes activities at the international, national, provincial, and Haida Gwaii levels. The micro level focuses on individuals within the HGI involved in the operations pertaining to the RSS.**

Figure 9 displays the scales I used to catalogue and explore important events and moments in relation to the RSS. The scales here are reflective of the “niche, regime, landscape” scales used in *The Evolution of Social Innovation* in the multi-level perspective framework (McGowan et al., 2017). As the authors note, these terms come with particular word associations and may be limiting when considering where particular actors and activities lie on the scale (McGowan et al., 2017). I chose to loosely frame these three scales as micro, meso, and macro, all with a focus on the RSS. The macro scale included international, national, and provincial events, the meso scale encompassed activities related to the communities of Haida Gwaii, and the micro scale focused on individuals within or adjacent to the organization that may have influenced the RSS at some level. A preliminary ten-year timeline has been created for use by the HGI in future promotion, education, and outreach actions. For the purposes of this thesis, my analysis will focus on activities at the Haida Gwaii Institute and Reconciliation Studies Semester level, with the mention of some events at other scales in the years 2015-2018. The following four sections begin

with a high-level diagram, visually displaying the salient events and activities, followed by an in-depth explanation of each scale.

### 6.3 2015 – Planning Year

The diagram below summarizes some key events happening across scales in the initial planning phase of the RSS. The sections following will further explain these events and their potential significance on the development of the semester.



**Figure 10. 2015 Cross Scalar Diagram. The planning phase of the Reconciliation Studies Semester (RSS) began in May 2015, and was influenced by the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan for the Haida Gwaii Institute (HGI). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission released their findings and Calls to Action. The HGI also began engaging with the communities of Haida Gwaii and leadership from across the islands.**

### **6.3.1 National/International Scale**

When discussions around the RSS first began in 2015, there were several important events taking place at the national level that may have influenced the tone and content of those initial conversations. On June 2, 2015, the TRC released their findings after six years of traveling across the country and speaking to over 6,750 former residential school students and witnesses (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015d). Along with the findings, the TRC posted 94 Calls to Action aiming to tackle both the legacy of residential schools, and reconciliation moving forward (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015d). A more comprehensive description of the TRC can be found in 3.4.5 Reconciliation.

The TRC concluded on December 18, 2015 with the release of their final report, “Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future”, in which they described the Indian Residential School (IRS) system as cultural genocide (Monkman, 2019; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, n.d.). This was an important report in bringing the truth about residential schools into the collective Canadian consciousness, and sparked conversations on reconciliation.

The other significant national event was the October 2015 Federal Election, in which the Liberal government won a majority in the House of Commons, led by Justin Trudeau (CBC News, 2015). This election saw a switch from a Conservative majority government, which had been in power for almost ten years, to a Liberal majority (Zurcher, 2015). Running on a platform of change, some of the campaign promises made by the Liberal party government included: increasing funding for First Nations education; enacting a moratorium on oil tanker traffic in northern British Columbia; developing a Federal Reconciliation Framework; and the development of an inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015). These promises were made all in the hopes of restoring “the federal



government's relationship with Aboriginal Peoples" (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015; The Canadian Press, 2015).

One of the most prominent first steps the newly elected Liberal government made was the announcement of a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG) on December 8, 2015 (Mas, 2015). The first phase of the inquiry was to speak to and consult with families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls to determine the most appropriate course of action for the inquiry both in terms of process and desired achievements. At the time, Phase 2 was scheduled for the spring of 2016. Phase 2 would be the actual inquiry itself, but this would not begin until adequate consultation had taken place to determine the appropriate course of action for the inquiry overall.

### **6.3.2 Significant Regional Events**

There were two main events that happened across Haida Gwaii and across British Columbia more broadly that are worth mentioning. In December of 2015, the Council of the Haida Nation (CHN) had an election, in which kil tlaats 'gaa *Peter Lantin* was (re)elected as president.

Another major event for the Haida Nation was a peace treaty made between the Haida Nation and the Heiltsuk Nation. The Heiltsuk people are found on the Central Coast near Bella Bella, British Columbia (Heiltsuk Nation, 2015). The Heiltsuk and the Haida have historically clashed with one another over territorial disputes in the area (Erwin, 2015). This peace treaty came out after the two nations have worked together over a number of issues, including the opposition of the Northern Gateway pipeline, and the commercial herring fisheries in Heiltsuk territory (Erwin, 2015).

### **6.3.3 Haida Gwaii Institute**

In 2015, the HGI unveiled a new five-year strategic plan for 2016-2020 that prioritized reconciliation programming. The strategic plan outlined a desire for growth in the coming years of the program, announcing plans to explore programs in the fields of reconciliation and marine conservation, and exploring the creation of professional development programs. The three strategic priorities for the HGI by 2020 were:

1. World-Class Education and Research Institute
2. Community Engagement and Outreach
3. Financial Sustainability

The mandate of providing world-class education specifically highlights program expansion to include a semester in reconciliation, which set the stage for the organization moving forward. In the summer of 2015, the HGI took on several important activities related to the development of the Reconciliation Studies Semester (RSS) planning. The three-day planning workshop at the end of May was the launch point for developing curriculum and conceptualizing what a post-secondary semester in reconciliation studies might look like in the context of Haida Gwaii. More information on this planning workshop can be found in the Case Study chapter.

After these meetings took place, curriculum developers were hired for each of the five proposed courses. Based on significant interests from educators locally and across Canada, the HGI created pairs to co-develop each course, which resulted in Haida local and a non-Indigenous off-islander pairings for curriculum development. Given only the course title and draft course description, the curriculum co-developers were given creative freedom to draft the course how they saw fit, which then underwent several iterations back and forth with the HGI to refine the

syllabi. After this process for all five courses, the final syllabi were sent to all curriculum developers for each course, as well as to the University of British Columbia (UBC) for senate approval. Throughout the following two years, the HGI hosted community meetings in the communities of *G̱aw Tlagee Masset* and *Old Massett*, as well as communicated with local leadership to keep them informed, including the Hereditary Chiefs Council, Old Massett Village Council, the Skidegate Band Council, and the CHN. The purposes of the community meetings, held in January 2016, June 2016, and June 2017 respectively, were to field questions about the HGI, since it was a relatively unknown organization to the north end communities, and go through the syllabi for the proposed courses. The goal was to begin building a long-term, ideally mutually beneficial relationship between the HGI and the communities of *G̱aw Tlagee Masset* and *Old Massett*. As part of this work, the HGI were successful in receiving a grant from UBC Forestry to help cover the costs of curriculum development. The instructors for the courses were also brought out to Haida Gwaii before the pilot year of the program to bring everyone onto the same page about the program.

Also, during this time, the HGI was part of a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Insight Grant Submission in collaboration with the University of Waterloo through the Waterloo Institute of Social Innovation and Resilience (WISIR), and several other universities and organizations. The application, titled “Practicing Reconciliation Through Teaching and Research on Haida Gwaii: A Collaborative Research Project”, was intended to explore reconciliation education, Indigenous research collaboration opportunities on Haida Gwaii, and disseminate the lessons and experiences from Haida Gwaii to across the country and beyond. The 2015 application for the SSHRC Insight Grant was unsuccessful.

The HGI also attended the 2015 Indigenous Innovation Summit on November 19-21 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where they spoke on Education Innovation as part of a panel discussion with representatives from Cisco Canada and Indspire. Two members from the HGI staff presented and spoke about the benefits the HGI offers to the communities of Haida Gwaii, and the power of experiential learning and transformative education in the cross-cultural space of Haida Gwaii (National Association of Friendship Centres, 2015).

Finally, as part of the development of the RSS and reconciliation education more broadly, the HGI began forming a partnership with Reconciliation Canada. In early December 2015, the HGI met with representatives from Reconciliation Canada, support personnel from WISIR, and a curriculum development advisor for the RSS, to discuss how the two organizations could work with one another in mutually beneficial ways. The most obvious partnership identified at this point was sharing curricula as a possible launch point for jointly offering programs and sharing resources across organizations. At these meetings, conversations also revolved the continuing discussion of reconciliation education on Haida Gwaii and what it might look like moving into the future.

#### **6.3.4 Reconciliation Studies Semester**

There is significant interrelationship between the HGI and RSS scales, particularly at this phase of program development. At the program level, the most important event that took place at this point in relation to the RSS was the hiring of the curriculum developers for the five courses.

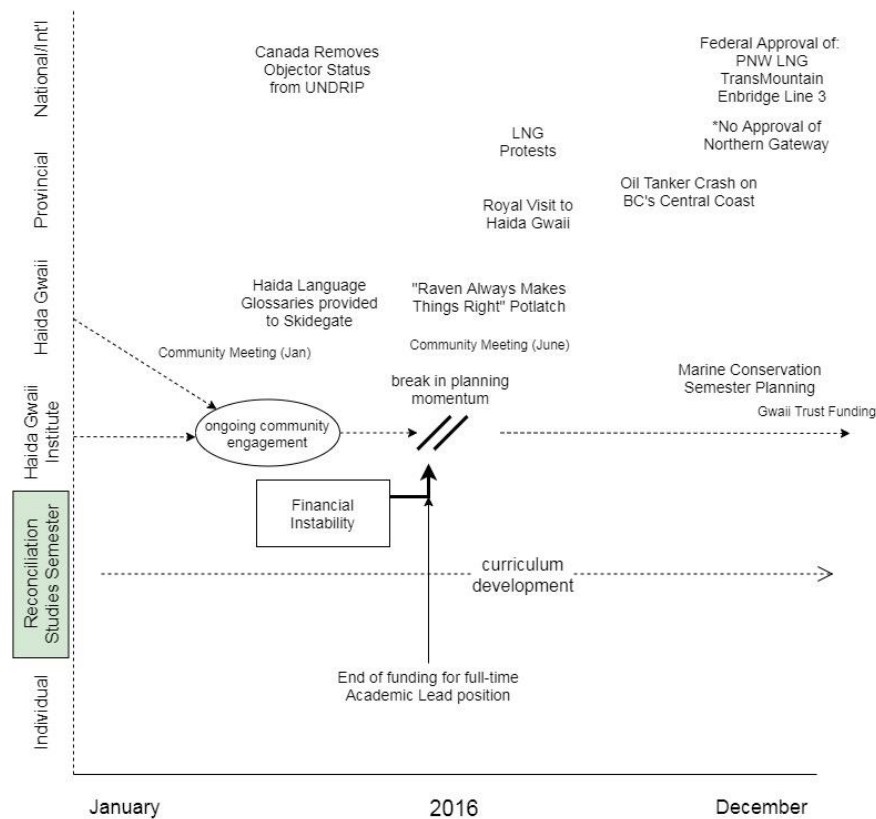
Although the conversations for the RSS had begun, the discussions were very much at the abstract level of course themes and general intentions for the program, as opposed to specific operational components of the program itself. Additionally, the HGI continued to run the Natural

Resource Studies and Natural Resource Science semesters in the winter and fall of 2015, respectively.

### **6.3.5 Individual**

At the organization level, a significant shift in the HGI was the hiring of a new Executive Director. The previous executive director had held the position since the inception of the HGI, so this change marked an important opportunity for change and transition within the HGI. As well, in the fall of 2015 I participated in the Natural Resource Science semester. This was my first exposure to the HGI, and I became familiar with the staff and the organization during my tenure as a student in the program.

## 6.4 2016 – Interim Year



**Figure 11. 2016 Cross Scalar Diagram. Curriculum development continued in the 2016 year. There was a brief break in planning momentum due to financial instability encountered by the Haida Gwaii Institute (HGI) and the end of funding for a full time Academic lead position. Community meetings still took place in January and June, and new planning began for a semester in Marine Conservation. Canada removed its objector status from UNDRIP, and several pipelines in British Columbia began to be approved by the federal government.**

### 6.4.1 National/International Scale

A positive step that was taken in regards to Canada's commitments to Indigenous rights was the country officially removing its objector status from the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in May of 2016 (Fontaine, 2016). UNDRIP was first adopted by the United Nations in 2007, and is comprised of 46 articles which create a framework of minimum human rights standards pertaining to Indigenous peoples across the world (United

Nations, 2007). At the time UNDRIP was adopted, there were four votes in opposition: Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and Canada (United Nations, n.d.). Although the previous Conservative government did endorse UNDRIP in 2010, they did not deem it legally binding (Fontaine, 2016).

In October, a tug boat coming down from Alaska ran aground and began leaking diesel into the water near the Great Bear Rainforest, located in nearby Heiltsuk territory (The Canadian Press, 2016). The tug boat was pulling a fuel barge, which was empty at the time, but the spill still threatened the waters, which contain over 20 important harvestable species for the local communities and economy (The Canadian Press, 2016). This event sparked nation-wide conversations about oil tanker traffic on the North Coast, and in November, Justin Trudeau promised to impose an oil tanker ban in the area (Cheadle, 2016).

There were also several natural resource development project decisions made at the federal level that would have direct impacts on the people and beings of British Columbia. Among these major projects, the first to receive federal approval was the Pacific North West Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) project owned by Petronas, a \$36-billion project that would export gas from Canadian oil fields in Alberta to the Asian markets (Karstens-Smith, 2016). The project included the construction of a facility to convert the natural gas into LNG and a marine terminal on Lelu Island, near Prince Rupert, British Columbia (Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, 2018).

The federal government also made the controversial decision of approving two major pipelines on November 29, 2016: Kinder Morgan's TransMountain pipeline expansion, and the Enbridge Line 3 replacement (Cheadle, 2016). In his announcement, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

acknowledged that the decision would not be supported by many Canadians, but that it was ultimately “in the best interests of Canada and Canadians” (Cheadle, 2016). The Line 3 replacement was the less well known of the two projects, replacing an existing pipeline between Hardisty, Alberta and Superior, Wisconsin in the United States (running through Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba) and effectively doubling the capacity of the pipeline (Cheadle, 2016; Enbridge, n.d.).

The more contentious of the projects to be approved, the TransMountain pipeline, has been described as a “lightning rod for climate protests”, and had already faced strong opposition and public protests across the province of British Columbia prior to the approval announcement (CBC News, 2016b; Cheadle, 2016). The Kinder Morgan project, which would move tar sands oil from Alberta out to the coast via British Columbia, received large amounts of media attention partly due to the fact that the pipeline runs through suburban areas of Vancouver (Cheadle, 2016). The approval of both of these projects was met with strong opposition from many Indigenous leaders, who viewed this decision as a betrayal and step backwards on the nation-to-nation relationship building the federal government had been promising since the election (Cheadle, 2016)

Simultaneous to the approval of these two projects, the Liberal government announced they would not approve of the Northern Gateway pipeline, which was planned to run through northwest British Columbia, and announced a promise to impose a bill that would ban oil tanker traffic on the northwest coast of the Pacific Ocean as the result of the oil tanker spill (Cheadle, 2016).



### 6.4.2 Significant Regional Events

The approval of the Petronas LNG project was met with significant protests on Haida Gwaii. This approval coincided with the Royal Visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge to Haida Gwaii on September 30, 2016. British Columbia Premier Christy Clark was scheduled to travel to Haida Gwaii with the Duke and Duchess, but was asked not to come to Haida Gwaii by Haida leaders due to her public support of the LNG project (CBC News, 2016a). Many locals took advantage of the media attention surrounding the Royal Visit to wear shirts that said “No LNG” as a way to peacefully and silently protest the project and related fracking developments (CBC News, 2016a). The Royal Visit brought media attention to Haida Gwaii, and the Haida were able to leverage this opportunity to highlight their opposition to the LNG project.

The Haida Nation also continued making significant steps in protecting their culture and identity as a nation. An important step in language revitalization on Haida Gwaii came from the Skidegate Haida Immersion Program (SHIP) providing complimentary copies of their Skidegate Xaayda kil *Haida language* glossary to all homes in *Hlgaagilda* Skidegate (Council of the Haida Nation, 2016). The Haida Nation also sent a delegation to Ottawa to meet with federal ministers and Prime Minister Trudeau in November 2016. During these meetings, the delegation discussed issues including the ongoing Haida title case, the Northern Gateway pipeline, and reconciliation (Council of the Haida Nation, 2016).

Finally, there was a significant Potlatch that took place on August 13, 2016, in which two Haida hereditary chiefs were stripped of their titles (Jang, 2016). The potlatch, themed “Raven Always Makes Things Right”, was put on by the Yahgu’laanaas/ Jaanas Raven clan in response to the two chiefs secretly supporting the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline while the Haida Nation was publicly fighting the project in court (Jang, 2016). This event was significant in that it fully

utilized Haida law and governance structures, while also creating tension amongst members of the clan and broader Haida Gwaii community (Jang, 2016).

### **6.4.3 Haida Gwaii Institute**

The HGI strategic plan was unveiled in 2016, and formalized the organizational mandates for the next five years. As part of the strategic goal of financial sustainability, the HGI put together a case for support for funders in 2016. Since HGI had previously relied on government grants, the organization hoped to increase their financial sustainability through other funding sources. The biggest financial priorities for the HGI were to develop Haida Gwaii Semesters in Reconciliation Studies and Marine Planning. Other financial priorities included bursaries for local and Indigenous students, a Haida Gwaii speaker series, and professional development. The marketing for donations was to further social innovation, education in real-world settings, community economic development, and local capacity building.

In the face of this financial instability, the HGI began conversations around renegotiating their relationship with UBC Faculty of Forestry in late 2016 (Haida Gwaii Institute, 2019c). Up until this point, the HGI had operated with autonomy from UBC, but had their courses accredited through the Faculty of Forestry. The intent of shifting this agreement into a more formal partnership was to provide more financial sustainability for the HGI so they could continue to offer their programming at relatively affordable costs to students. These conversations continued to evolve over the subsequent years until a formal partnership was reached in early 2018, described more in 6.6.3 Haida Gwaii Institute.

Despite the fact SSHRC Insight Grant was unsuccessful in 2015, WISIR took the feedback from the SSHRC committee into account and resubmitted the application in the 2016 round. One of

the largest concerns voiced by SSHRC was the lack of Haida co-applicants, which was remedied in the 2016 round of application by including members of the Haida Gwaii Museum as part of the grant. Furthermore, positions were proposed in the 2016 version of the application for a Research Advisory Council, a Student internship position, and a community research position that would be filled by Haida researchers. The 2016 application was given 4A status by SSHRC, meaning that it was deemed fundable but did not receive funding. The team was encouraged by SSHRC to reapply in the 2017 round of the competition.

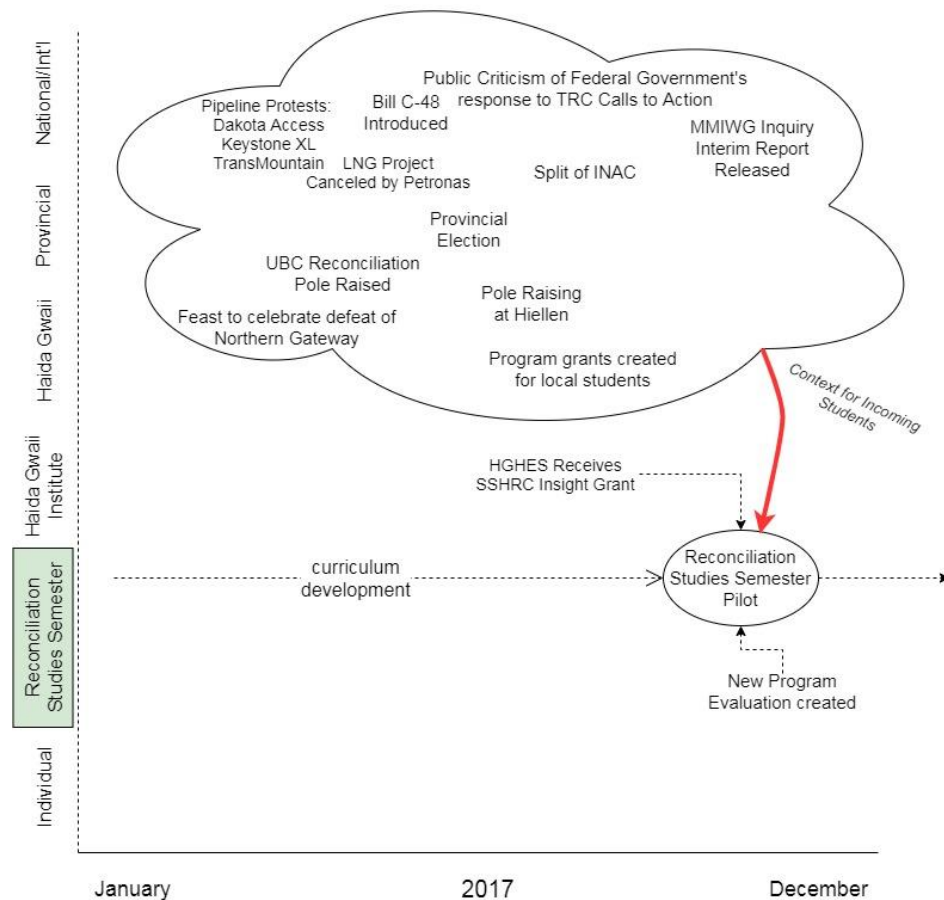
The other significant endeavour of the HGI during 2016 was initial planning for a Marine Conservation semester. These meetings took place November 18-20, 2016 in Sandspit, where the Marine Conservation semester is scheduled to take place. There were 28 confirmed participants from Gwaii Haanas, the CHN, UBC, University of Victoria, the HGI, the BC Ministry of Forests, and the Archipelago Management Board.

#### **6.4.4 Individual**

The Academic Lead position within the HGI had been funded through a Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT) grant, which was ending in 2016. At this point, the HGI did not have economic surplus to transition this position to fulltime. Although the HGI had successfully obtained a grant from Gwaii Trust Society to assist in the preparation and implementation stages of the RSS (which would have continued to support the Academic Lead position), by the time the organization had been made aware of their successful application, the person in this position had left Haida Gwaii for a fulltime position in Vancouver with UBC. As a result, this position went unfilled after 2016.

## 6.5 2017 – Pilot Year

The 2017 diagram displays potentially significant national and regional events that set the context for students coming into the pilot year for the RSS.



**Figure 12. 2017 Cross Scalar Diagram. The Reconciliation Studies Semester (RSS) piloted in September 2017 in the communities of Masset and Old Massett. The Haida Gwaii Institute (HGI) successfully received a SSHRC Insight Grant, intended to support education and research in reconciliation, in the fall. There were several major events taking place at the national and provincial levels including changes to the structure of the federal government and more pipeline approvals. New program evaluation was created for the RSS that was based on existing evaluation materials for the HGI programs.**

### **6.5.1 National/International Scale**

On the national scale, there were several prominent news stories around issues related to Indigenous sovereignty and the relationship of Indigenous peoples to the federal government. The first were a series of pipeline protests that took place both in Canada and the United States, in response to the federal approvals of several pipelines in 2016. The Dakota Access Pipeline gained significant media attention for the protests that occurred at Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in South Dakota. There were also protests across Canada related to the Kinder Morgan TransMountain Pipeline Expansion. As well, the Keystone XL Pipeline which was proposed to run from the tar sands down to a refinery in Texas also faced protests both in Canada and the US. Amidst the ongoing pipeline tensions, and despite the approval of the project by the government, Petronas withdrew their plan for the Pacific LNG pipeline (Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, 2018). The project was deemed no longer financially viable by Petronas, as the price of LNG globally dropped and the cost of the project exceeded \$36 billion.

Moving in a positive direction, in May 2017 the federal government announced Bill C-48, “An Act respecting the regulation of vessels that transport crude oil or persistent oil to or from ports or marine installations located along British Columbia's north coast”, shortened to the Oil Tanker Moratorium Act (Minister of Transport, 2017). The act sets up an area from the northern tip of Vancouver Island to the British Columbia border with Alaska, including Haida Gwaii, that would be forbidden to oil tanker traffic due to the environmental sensitivity of the area and the damaging effects in the event of an oil spill.

Another important national event was the splitting of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) into two departments. Although it has undergone several name changes in recent

decades, the structure of INAC has remained relatively unchanged, and is the department of the federal government which oversees all policies related to Aboriginal people in Canada (comprised of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people) (J. Bell, 2017). The full impact of this split is still yet to be seen, but it did signify a shift in the federal government's perception of its relationship with Indigenous people (J. Bell, 2017). The two departments became Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Development Canada (CIRNAC). The purpose of ISC is to solely provide services to Indigenous communities across the country to improve overall socioeconomic wellbeing (Government of Canada, 2019b). The role of CIRNAC is to "renew the nation-to-nation, Inuit-Crown, government-to-government relationship between Canada and First Nations, Inuit and Métis; modernize Government of Canada structures to enable Indigenous peoples to build capacity and support their vision of self-determination; and lead the Government of Canada's work in the North" (Government of Canada, 2019a). The intention of this was to ensure that discussions around nation-to-nation relationships could occur in a meaningful way with a department adequately set up to participate in those discussions without causing interruptions in the distribution of finances and services to reserves across the country (J. Bell, 2017). This split also comes directly out of the 1996 RCAP recommendations to create separate departments for dealing with services and rights, respectively (J. Bell, 2017; Dussault et al., 1996).

Nationally, the federal government was receiving some criticisms related to the implementation of the 94 Calls to Action outlined by the TRC (Forrest, 2017). Critics of the government's actions highlighted the fact that despite the fact that the federal government was ordered to fully implement Jordan's Principle, a principle that seeks to ensure that all Indigenous children have equitable access to necessary government-funded services (including health and child welfare),

they have been handed down three non-compliance orders since 2016 (Forrest, 2017). Moreover, despite the federal government's claims of eliminating the funding gap between Indigenous children attending schools on reserve versus off-reserve, a watchdog report claimed that on-reserve schools might still be underfunded by over \$500 million in the 2016-17 fiscal year (Forrest, 2017).

One other significant national event was the release of the interim report from the MMIWG Inquiry. The interim report highlighted some of the challenges in undertaking the inquiry and recommended procedural changes to ease the process as it continues (Aiello, 2017). These recommendations included providing more funding to Indigenous groups to allow them to participate in the inquiry process, extending support to Health Canada to provide services as the result of the inquiry, and provide workarounds for the inquiry to complete its mandate which was being impeded by federal administrative rules (Aiello, 2017).

### **6.5.2 Important Regional Events**

In March 2017, following the federal announcement that the Northern Gateway pipeline would not be approved in late 2016, the communities of Haida Gwaii hosted a "Celebrate our Victory" feast to celebrate (Hudson, 2017a). The feast was to commemorate the Haida Nation, who had banded together under one united voice, and had over 1000 citizens testify to the Joint Review Panel about the pipeline project (Hudson, 2017a). This celebration marked an important milestone in grassroots movements to protest major fossil fuel development in Canada, and although the announcement about Northern Gateway included the approval of Kinder Morgan and LNG projects, it was still considered an important milestone to celebrate by the communities of Haida Gwaii (Hudson, 2017a).

In May, there was an important provincial election, which took over 50 days to reach a final decision for the future of the British Columbia government (McElroy, 2017). The Liberal government, who had been in power for 16 years and under the leadership of Christy Clark since 2011, finished on election night with 43 seats, just two seats ahead of the New Democrat Party (NDP) with 41, and with the Green Party holding 3 seats (McElroy, 2017). However, there were approximately 179,000 absentee ballots that yet to be counted, and there was the possibility for the Green Party to support either the Liberals or the NDP in the event that the final vote count did not change (McElroy, 2017). Either party needed to have 44 out of the total 87 seats in the legislature to hold a majority (McElroy, 2017). Three weeks after the election, the Green Party agreed to support the NDP, giving them the 44 seats needed to run as a majority (McElroy, 2017). After weeks of uncertainty within the provincial legislature, the leader of the NDP, John Horgan, introduced a non-confidence motion in the house (McElroy, 2017). This vote of non-confidence narrowly passed, but resulted in John Horgan becoming the 36<sup>th</sup> premier of British Columbia as the leader of the NDP (McElroy, 2017).

In 2017, there were two important monumental Haida poles raised in the province, each with their own significance. In April, a Haida-carved pole was raised at the University of British Columbia (UBC) Vancouver campus. This pole, known as the “Reconciliation Pole” was carved by master carver 7idansuu *James Hart* and several apprentice carvers over several years (Ward, 2019). The land of the UBC campus is the traditional territory of the Musqueam people, who gave their blessing to raise the pole on the land and in accordance with Haida protocol (Ward, 2019). The pole depicts the story of Indigenous people spanning from pre-residential schools to the present, and includes a schoolhouse covered in copper nails to commemorate the children who died as the result of the IRS system (Ward, 2019). The pole now stands in the UBC campus



and serves as a reminder of the trauma of the past and the important work that needs to be done to repair the damages caused from residential schools in Canada.

Secondly, on June 21, 2017, a pole was raised along the banks of the Hiellen River, located at the old village site of Hiellen on the northern coast of Graham Island. This 51-foot cedar pole, carved by master carver Kilthguulans *Christian White* and commissioned by the Old Massett Village Council, was an interpretation of a pole that one stood at the Hiellen village from the 1800s to 1900s (Brunet, 2019; Hudson, 2017b). The pole was raised on National Aboriginal Day, and the pole raising ceremony and feast was attended by over 1300 people (Brunet, 2019; Hudson, 2017b).

### **6.5.3 Haida Gwaii Institute**

In 2017, after resubmitting the application, the SSHRC Insight Grant was successfully awarded to WISIR and the HGI. Although the initial intent of the grant was to support the planning and development of the RSS, the intent of the grant shifted to support the evolution of the RSS and other research and education endeavours related to reconciliation on Haida Gwaii since the program itself launched in 2017. The first few months of activity following the funding approval were largely based around allocating funding out and bringing the various academic partners up to speed on the organizations involved (the HGI and the Haida Gwaii Museum), and helping revamp the existing program evaluation materials to better suit the content of the RSS, described more in the analysis in 6.10 Program Pilots – 2017-18.

Meetings and correspondence with Gaw Tlagee *Masset* and *Old Massett* community members and various leadership groups continued in 2017, particularly in the lead up to the launch of the RSS in September. Community members were contacted to determine potential accommodation

options for incoming students, and to inquire about community educators (those of Haida ancestry and residents of Haida Gwaii) available to give guest lectures and presentations in the courses throughout the term.

The HGI was also successful in partnering with Gwaii Trust Society to offer grants to incoming students. The first set of grants is targeted towards students from off-island intending to travel to Haida Gwaii for post-secondary schooling, in the amounts of \$1500 for the semester and \$600 for the summer sessions. The other grants are for students from Haida Gwaii who are returning to Haida Gwaii to take the programs, and there are three \$7000 grants available each year. The purpose of these grants is both to reduce possible financial barriers to participate (particularly for local students), and also to bring more money to Haida Gwaii to circulate locally by students coming to and living in the communities for the duration of the programs. Since the grants have been offered by Gwaii Trust, five local students have received the larger grants, and about 25 visiting students received the smaller grants. Both are based on merit and financial need and require an application and final reporting.

#### **6.5.4 Reconciliation Studies Semester**

The Reconciliation Studies Semester was piloted from September to December of 2017, with 20 students from across the country enrolling in the program. For information on the content of the program, see 4.2.3 Structure and Organization of the Reconciliation Studies Semester.

An important change for the semester programs was the revamp of the existing end of term evaluation. The end of term evaluation was first created in 2013, with the intention of evaluating the then-new semester in Natural Resource Science. Since it was created in 2013, the evaluation package had gone largely unchanged. The previous evaluations and end of term debriefs for the

HGI have been based on the guiding principles and practices of utilization focused evaluation and developmental evaluation. Documents prepared for the 2013 debrief discuss developmental evaluation and its underlying tenets. At the time, developmental evaluation represented an opportunity “to expand current evaluation protocols to gather both more and more useful data from students throughout the semester”. The materials created in 2013 have been used for every semester program, with minor modifications being made over the years as the HGI continued to evolve and look at different aspects of the student experience. Since these materials were first compiled in 2013, there have been many strides taken in expanding the definition of program evaluation to include approaches such as principles-focused evaluation, cross-cultural evaluation, and Indigenous evaluation. Many of these tenets and approaches are similar, including: participatory methods, recognizing context, and emphasizing the importance of relationships amongst evaluators and stakeholders.

At the time, the HGI built the evaluation based on the values of the organization (which have since changed). The values at the time were:

- We believe that making higher education available in Haida Gwaii enriches our communities and the lives of the people who come to study here.
- HGHEs and the education we deliver are based on the principle of mutual respect, for each other and the human and ecological communities we inhabit.
- Based on our experience in Haida Gwaii, we believe that working together and learning from each other leads to new ideas and innovative solutions.
- We respect and learn from the contributions and leadership of the Haida Nation.

These values were turned into evaluation questions that explored concepts of wellbeing, holistic understanding, perspective transformations, and intercultural learning opportunities. Each question was approached in a different way in an attempt to provide students with multiple methods of providing and recording organization feedback. These methods included individual reflections, paired interviews, and collective feedback group discussions. In addition to these higher-level questions, there was a package of surveys distributed to all the students, which asked questions on Guest Speakers, Economic Impact, Student Accommodations, and overall program logistics. Packaged as an end of term “debrief” for the semester, students would come in for a half day following the completion of their coursework to reflect on their experience within the program and identify areas of strengths and opportunities of improvement for subsequent years.

In 2017, in the face of a new program operating in a very different environment, the HGI hoped to redesign their evaluation strategy to deliberately explore the RSS and capture some of the challenges and opportunities for improvement. In November 2017, formal discussions began around how to tailor the evaluation around the new RSS. Rather than having the end of term evaluation structured entirely around program values, as was customary for previous semesters, the evaluation expanded to include RSS-specific considerations that the HGI was hoping to receive student feedback on. These considerations included program expectations and recruitment, speaking to marketing and attracting students, and wellbeing and support, exploring how the HGI was serving the students. With this in mind, the new evaluation packages were created. Wellbeing and support questions were turned into individual reflections, and the program expectations were turned into paired interviews, where the students would take turns asking one another questions to foster discussions and dialogue about recruitment and

experience. The program values, described in more detail in 6.10.4 Exploring Options for Program Evaluation, were turned into broad, open-ended questions that sought to capture how well the HGI was embodying their organizational values in practice.

In addition to the regular surveys that were standard for all HGI programs, a new survey was developed to obtain written feedback based on concerns that students had voiced throughout the term. The questions covered topics including the experience with the wider Haida Gwaii community, the challenges students experienced when discussing the program and organization to people in the community, and ways the HGI could improve their support for students throughout the semester in future years.

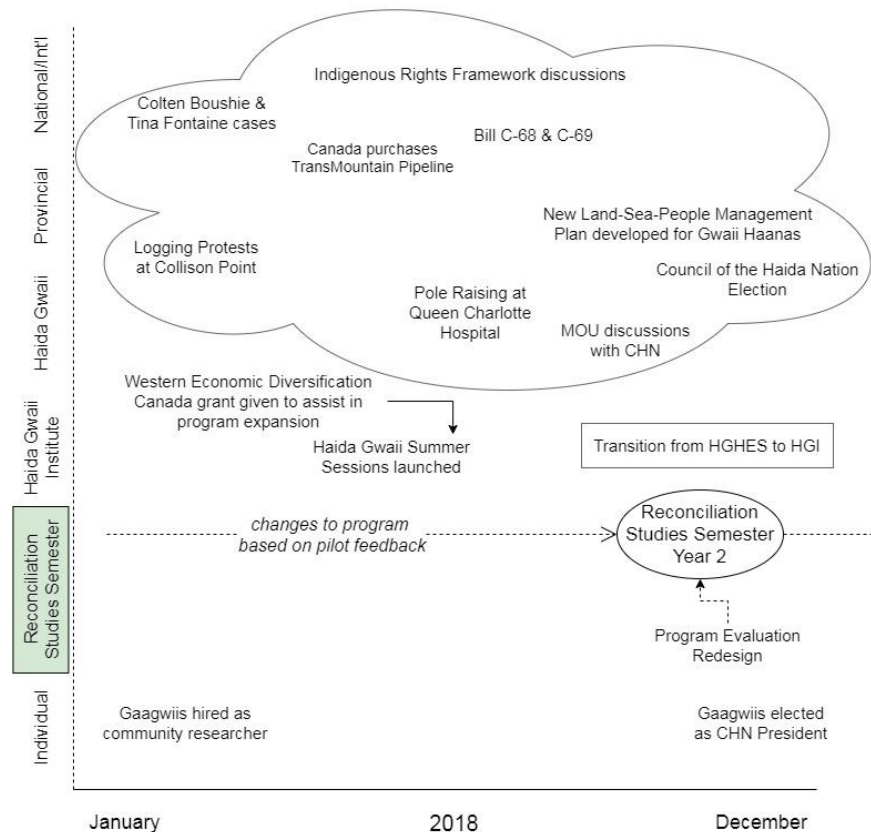
The process of the evaluation itself will be discussed in more detail in 6.10.4 Exploring Options for Program Evaluation. After the evaluation, there were critiques made of the program that were broadly grouped into two categories: procedural and epistemological. Some of the concerns voiced by the students were related to the day to day operations and layout of the courses, and could likely be solved through simple procedural changes in terms of staffing and scheduling. Other concerns seemed to be rooted in deeper pedagogical and epistemological issues that might require a more substantive reworking of the courses and program as a whole. Based on this input, several procedural changes were made to the RSS before it was offered for the second year in 2018. These procedural changes are described in more detail in 6.10.5 Improvements Between Years.

One particular concern that was voiced by several students was in regards to the term “reconciliation” being used in the title of the program. Several students suggested changing the name, since it may give off the false impression of being a “how-to” guide for reconciliation,

particularly since it is a process, not an end point (Corntassel, 2012; Garneau, 2012; Laucius, 2017). Staff identified that the program was never intended to be a how-to guide, and that this message was relayed to the students in the orientation at the beginning of the semester. The program was intended to provide opportunities for discussion and dialogue on the topics of each course related to reconciliation. The term “reconciliation” was intended to be a place-holder title only until a more appropriate or less charged word was decided upon.

## 6.6 2018 – Year 2

The second year of the RSS largely followed the same organization, delivery and content of the pilot year. Several operational fixes were put in place to address some of the concerns voiced by the students after the end of term debrief in the fall of 2017.



**Figure 13. 2018 Cross Scalar Diagram.** Changes were made before the Reconciliation Studies Semester (RSS) ran in the fall of 2018 based on feedback from the first pilot. The program evaluation was redesigned based on student and staff feedback. The Haida Gwaii Institute (HGI) launched new summer sessions and also began to transition into a formal partnership with the University of British Columbia. There were more activities taking place at the macro scales, including discussions on an Indigenous rights framework, logging protests on Haida Gwaii, and a new management plan for Gwaii Haanas.

### **6.6.1 National/International Scale**

Tensions continued to arise in 2018 at the national level related to reconciliation and the relationship between Indigenous people and Canada. Two important events that received national attention were acquittals of men in two high profile cases of the deaths of Indigenous youth, Tina Fontaine in Manitoba, and Colten Boushie in Saskatchewan. These cases incited outrage from Indigenous communities across the country, and brought up the issue of racism in the legal system and whether or not these cases would have had different outcomes had the victims been non-Indigenous (Milward, 2018). Tina Fontaine was a 15 year old girl from Sagkeeng First Nation in Manitoba who was found murdered in Winnipeg in 2014, and Colten Boushie was a 22 year old man from Red Pheasant First Nation in Saskatchewan who was shot and killed in 2016 (Milward, 2018). Both of these cases and their portrayal in the Canadian media were controversial and also sparked conversations on the pervasive racism and colonialism that can be found in Canadian journalism (Young & Callison, 2018).

The year 2018 also saw tumultuous issues in regards to a framework to formalize Indigenous rights. On February 14, 2018, the federal government announced the development of “a Recognition and Implementation of Rights Framework”, which would assist in the relationship between Indigenous people and the federal government moving forward (Office of the Prime Minister, 2018). While this was seen as a positive and instrumental step moving forward in mending and repairing the relationship between Indigenous people and the crown, exactly nine months later on November 14, 2018 the federal government announced it would not be tabling the Framework ahead of the federal election in the fall of 2019 (Barrera, 2018). The announcement to indefinitely postpone the framework was the result of opposition from Indigenous leaders across the country who said that the process for involvement was insufficient,



and that a discussion paper produced in the interim did not adequately include or listen to Indigenous views and values (Barrera, 2018).

Another event that seemed to directly conflict with the federal government's promises was the May 29, 2018 announcement that the government was purchasing the TransMountain pipeline for \$4.5 billion (Chase, Cryderman, & Lewis, 2018). The purchase was intended to diversify Canada's oil exports to markets beyond the United States and to ensure the pipeline was built after Kinder Morgan threatened to walk away in the face of environmental, Indigenous, and provincial opposition (Chase et al., 2018). This announcement was met with over 100 protests and rallies across the country in direct opposition to the federal government's purchase of a pipeline and the resultant effects on climate change (CBC News, 2018).

The federal government did introduce two major bills in 2018 which proposed a substantial increase in the role of Indigenous groups in environmental decision-making (Gilbride & Bundock, 2018). Bill C-68 is "An Act to amend the Fisheries Act and other Acts in consequence", and Bill C-69 is "An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts". These two acts seek to change legislation that was previously amended under the Conservative government, and overhaul environmental assessment and protection regimes across Canada (Gilbride & Bundock, 2018). After the Conservative government made changes to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act to streamline the efficiency of the environmental assessment process, many critiques started coming out about the new legislation and lack of robustness in the process (Doelle, 2012; Gibson, 2012; Kirchhoff, Gardner, & Tsuji, 2013). Bill C-68 and Bill C-69 have been marketed by the Liberal government as necessary changes to "restore public trust in the federal approval process" for major

environmental developments and undertakings (Gilbride & Bundock, 2018). Moreover, a review of both bills found that Indigenous engagement mechanisms and processes were explicitly required, and that there are more opportunities created for involvement by Indigenous communities and groups to participate in the decision making process, even providing the ability for Canada to enter into regulatory agreements with Indigenous governing bodies (Gilbride & Bundock, 2018). Both of these bills seek to enshrine on-the-ground practices of environmental assessment and Indigenous consultation in actual legislation (Gilbride & Bundock, 2018). As of June 2019, both of these bills had received Royal Assent and were on their way to becoming laws.

### **6.6.2 Important Regional Events**

On Haida Gwaii, tensions around logging operations also reached a tipping point in the winter of 2018 with the blockades and logging injunctions taking place at Collison Point between Husby Logging and the CHN over a tree farm license. These blockades re-emphasized the tensions that continue to exist on Haida Gwaii despite these protocols and agreements around reconciliation and working together.

There was also a significant pole raising which took place on June 23, 2018 in honour of Hospital Day. Taking place every year in *Daajing Giids* Queen Charlotte, Hospital Day is one of the oldest celebrations that takes place on Haida Gwaii, and the 2018 celebration marked 110 years of the event (Kolsut, 2018). The monumental 40-foot cedar pole was carved by master carver Laada *Tim Boyko*, and combines the stories of Haida and western medicines into one pole (Hudson, 2018b). This event was particularly significant in that it was the first monumental pole raised in the village in over 200 years, and was used to signify the work undertaken by both

*Daajing Giids* Queen Charlotte and *Hlgaagilda* Skidegate in creating a health centre that provided both Haida and Western medicine to its patients (Kolsut, 2018).

In November 2018, Gwaii Haanas unveiled their new Gina ‘Waadluxan KilGuhlGa Land-Sea-People Management Plan, signifying a new era of management for the National Park Reserve. This event was significant in that it marked a new era of joint decision making and management of Gwaii Haanas, with a management plan for the lands, waters, and culture for the next ten years. As well, the Haida Heritage Centre, the space which holds the main offices of the HGI and hosts the Natural Resource Science and Natural Resource Studies semesters, celebrated its ten-year anniversary. The Haida Heritage Centre also functions as a space for public speakers and guest lectures, and also serves as a venue to conduct Haida ceremonies and cultural practices.

In December 2018, the CHN had an election, in which Gaagwiis *Jason Alsop* was elected as the incumbent president for the nation. Gaagwiis had worked for the HGI in both years of the RSS as an instructor, teaching the Reconciliation and Resource Management course at the end of the semester. The 2018 CHN election also saw Kii’iljuus *Barbara Wilson* join the council as regional representative for *Hlgaagilda* Skidegate. Kii’iljuus is also affiliated with the HGI, having co-taught the Ethnoecology and Ethnobotany course as part of the Haida Gwaii Summer Session in Plants, People, and Place, and having been a guest instructor for several of the HGI semester courses.

### **6.6.3 Haida Gwaii Institute**

As part of achieving the goal of financial sustainability as an organization, the Haida Gwaii Higher Education Society (HGHEs) transitioned to a more formal partnership with UBC Faculty of Forestry and created the Haida Gwaii Institute (HGI) in early 2018. The full implications of

the transition from the HGHEs to the HGI are still unknown. One of the most significant changes on paper is the transition of the Board from being a Board of Directors, to an Advisory Council. The Advisory Council is made up of the Board of Directors for the HGHEs and the Executive Director of the HGI. The HGI is now jointly governed by both the HGHEs, which continues to exist in name, and UBC Faculty of Forestry.

As part of spreading the word on the endeavours and goals of the HGI, two staff members attended a UBC Forestry in Place Event on March 9, 2018. The event, titled "Exploring Indigenous Relations with Forestry in British Columbia", included a variety of speakers on Aboriginal Initiatives in Forestry. The HGI gave a talk entitled: "Haida Gwaii Semesters - a cross-cultural, community-based initiative" and described the programs and the work that the HGI undertakes as an organization operating in a cross-cultural context.

In 2018, the HGI also began work on creating a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with CHN. The work has been delayed due to the transition in CHN leadership from kil tlaats 'gaa to Gaagwiis, but the HGI hopes to have the MOU signed by the fall of 2019. Once signed, it will make the HGI one of the few organizations to have an MOU signed with CHN.

Finally, in October 2018 the HGI received a grant from Western Economic Diversification Canada and Gwaii Trust. This grant was for a three-year timeframe, to support the expansion of HGI programming. The expansion included moving into more communities across Haida Gwaii and also to add more programs in the communities that the HGI already operates within (*Hlgaagilda* Skidegate and *Daajing Giids* Queen Charlotte). The grant funding covers 2018-2021, and is intended to meet community needs and desires for programming while simultaneously providing more financial sustainability for the HGI.

#### **6.6.4 Reconciliation Studies Semester**

There were some changes made to the RSS between the pilot year and second year of the program. After receiving feedback from students and instructors, the HGI chose to switch from all courses being mandatorily co-taught to bringing instructors in (primarily from on-island) who were the best fit for the program. As well, based on insights gained after the pilot semester for the RSS, the end of term debrief also took a different form in the second year. Rather than conducting a large group debrief with all students in the program, an HGI staff member met with students individually or small groups to open up dialogue about the program in a more intimate setting. The regular survey materials were distributed to the students prior to their meetings, and they were asked to fill these out on their own time and submit them to the HGI once completed. After the 2017 program, in which the sense was that not all voices were equally heard during the debrief, this approach was used to ensure that all students were given the opportunity to have their opinions and concerns heard and responded to in a comfortable setting.

Additionally, as part of the strategy for financial sustainability, the HGI launched two new programs, the Haida Gwaii Summer Sessions, in May 2018. The summer sessions would offer two UBC-accredited courses over a three-week duration. Students would pay program fees and tuition costs to UBC, and would spend a shorter time in Haida Gwaii than the usual four-month programs typically offered by the HGI.

#### **6.6.5 Individual**

There were some important changes that occurred at the scale of individuals in 2018. The first was that Gaagwiis *Jason Alsop* was hired through the SSHRC Insight Grant as a community researcher. This position was created by shifting funds originally designated for a PhD student into creating a community researcher position, with permission from SSHRC and at the

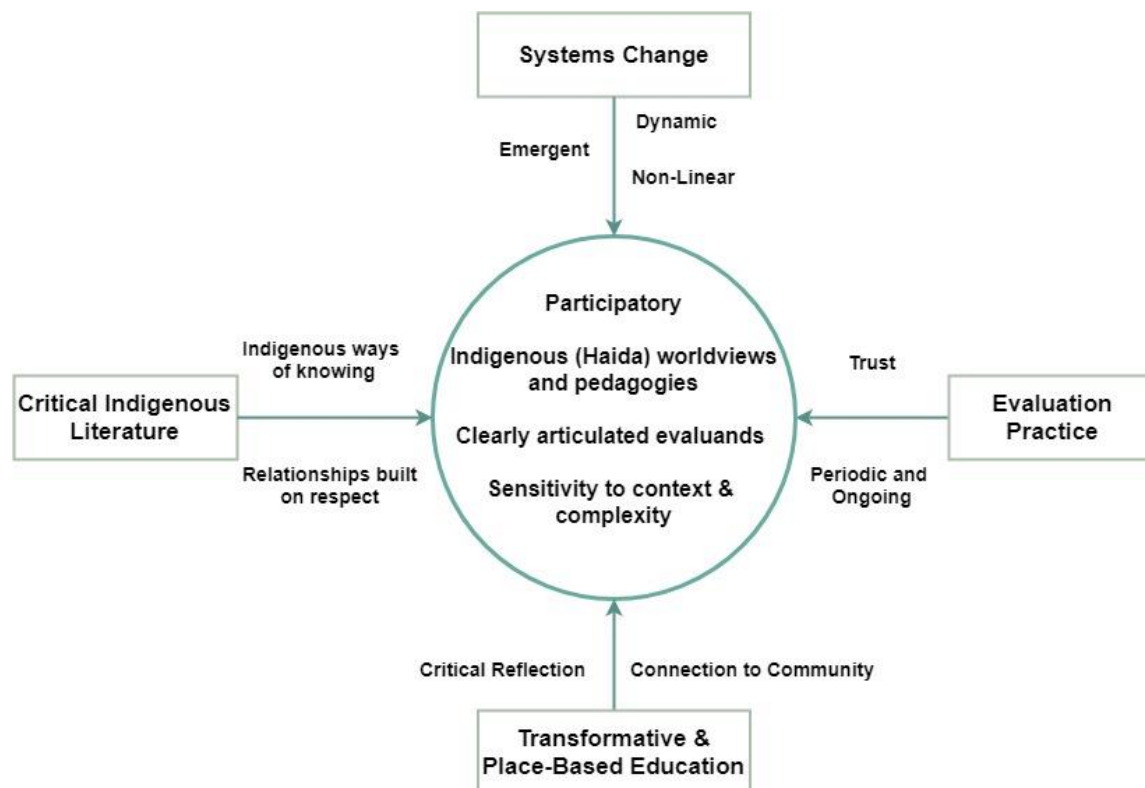
suggestion from Gaagwiis. Gaagwiis was hired on to help facilitate partnerships between the research team and community organizations, and organize research opportunities for Haida and local potential graduate students. Gaagwiis left this position in the late fall of 2018 when he was elected as president for the CHN.

## 6.7 Analysis

*“The principles of reconciliation – recognition and respect – must be present throughout the process. Students must feel safe in having a new, alarming, and challenging conversation.”*

Reconciliation Education Meetings, December 3, 2015

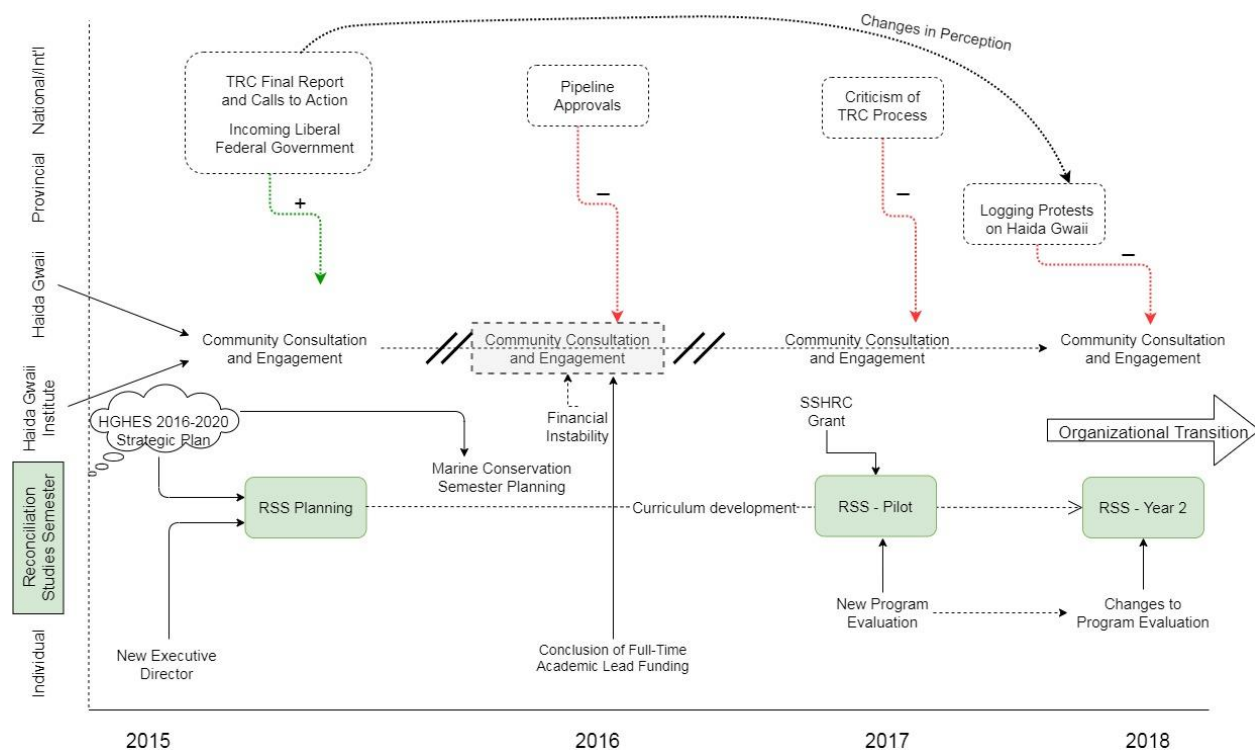
The analysis in this section examines HGI and RSS-related activities against the best practice criteria outlined in the Conceptual Framework:



**Figure 14. Conceptual Framework (from Literature Review Chapter)**

The intention of this analysis is *not* to critique the content of the RSS, but rather to explore how the program at the design and operational levels functioned, and to contextualize some of the challenges that occurred throughout the four years of program development and implementation.

The final diagram is a synthesis of the four years of the RSS, from 2015 to 2018. It includes what I have determined to be particularly salient events at the regional and national levels, as well as important events happening directly relating to the organization. Explicitly looking at the program in this way highlights the importance of cross-scale dynamics and the influence of events at higher scales. Social innovations that successfully change the system are ones which tend to evolve simultaneously with new norms and values happening at higher scales (Moore, 2017). As well, landscape-level events tend to act as strong attractors, exerting significant influence over the social innovation itself (Moore, 2017). For these reasons, it is useful to lay out the events over the four years in a cross-scalar way to begin to explore possible events that influenced the relative uptake and success of the program.



**Figure 15. Cross Scalar Diagram, 2015-2018.** The green boxes highlight the main stages of the Reconciliation Studies Semester (RSS), from program planning, to initial pilot, to the second year of the program. Throughout the development of the program, the Haida Gwaii Institute (HGI) engaged in consultation and engagement with the communities of Haida Gwaii. This engagement slowed down in 2016 as the HGI entered a period of financial instability and saw the conclusion of full time funding for their Academic Lead. There was an overall change in perception around the term reconciliation between 2015 and 2018. Initially, conversations around reconciliation included discussions of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and a newly elected Liberal federal government. As pipelines began to be approved, criticisms of the TRC process began, and logging protests began taking place on Haida Gwaii which may have negatively influenced the tone of conversations around reconciliation in the communities and the classrooms.

The following sections describe these major events and transitions to further contextualize some of the strengths and opportunities related to the RSS. The early events of the program can be described as the program starting conditions, which largely dictated the subsequent planning, engagement, and program design. The 2016 year can also be described as the interim year, where there was a relative dearth of information related to the planning and design of the RSS. This



year also generates some insights as to why the HGI may have encountered challenges when piloting the program in 2017. Finally, the two pilot years of the program are the era of shifting perceptions, in which the conversations and perceptions around reconciliation appear to be different than they were in the planning phase.

## **6.8 Program Starting Conditions**

### **6.8.1 Landscape Level Context**

When exploring the landscape level changes that occurred throughout the four years of program planning, development, and implementation, the topic of reconciliation appears to have fluctuated in popularity, both on Haida Gwaii and at a larger national scale. In 2015, there were several important events occurring both on Haida Gwaii and beyond. The planning stages of the RSS coincided with many important regional and national developments in conversations and discussions around reconciliation. One of the most significant events that occurred during this time was the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) final report and 94 calls to action addressing the legacy of residential schools and reconciliation. The calls to action set out aspirational statements for reconciliation, with focused calls to educational institutions (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015b). Call 62 identifies specific areas on integrating content related to the legacy of residential schools into school curriculum, and incorporating Indigenous teaching methods into classrooms across the country (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015b). These specific pieces in the TRC report provided external motivation to undertake the creation of the RSS. In addition, the TRC and its findings were used in advertisements for the RSS, as can be seen in some of the promotional posters.

When considering factors beyond the scope of the organization, the landscape of conversations around reconciliation was at a different point in 2015 than it is today. The change from a Conservative to Liberal government following the 2015 Federal election and the release of the TRC Report and Calls to Action were two large, significant events that resulted in positive momentum to have conversations about Indigenous sovereignty and reconciliation across the country. These events acted as a catalyst for developing this program as there was significant interest in reconciliation from local stakeholders, the organization, and the larger UBC and Haida Gwaii communities.

### **6.8.2 Regime Level Context**

Examining the initial phase of the RSS program in 2015, there appears to have been significant and well-intentioned planning that went into the structure and content. The desire to develop this program was partly driven by the fact that students from the existing Haida Gwaii Semesters programs expressed that they did not receive enough education or develop a nuanced understanding of reconciliation during the existing semesters. This exemplifies the HGI's willingness to create a program that would fit a need or gap in the content identified by previous students of other HGI programs. With the intention of offering programming in reconciliation broadly, the development of a cohesive program began in the 2015 planning stages with the creation of the RSS planning committee. The purpose of this committee was to develop themes that covered topics deemed to be important in regards to reconciliation. This inductive approach to course generation, in which the themes were collectively developed based on multiple days of conversation, meant that the courses all make sense in the broad narrative around reconciliation. The theme for this semester program was well-intentioned, seeking to both supplement an

existing desire from students to learn more about reconciliation, and to build off of the conversations and momentum at the provincial and national levels.

The planning sessions in 2015 took the form of several rounds of meetings, in which these conversations were summarized and grouped into collective themes. These were conversations and discussions amongst Haida Gwaii locals and curriculum developers from across Canada, which allowed for the program as a whole to be tailored to the Haida Gwaii context. The term “reconciliation studies” was always intended to be used as a placeholder by the organization, recognizing the often contentious nature of the term reconciliation (Corntassel, 2012; Garneau, 2012). The courses and overall content of the semester were able to grow organically and be based on the values and ideas of knowledge keepers and experts from Haida Gwaii. The confluence of these individuals created a bricolage, creating and developing ideas in relation to the novel idea of the RSS (McGowan et al., 2017; Moore, 2017). From the onset of planning, the HGI invited local Haida experts in the communities to attend the advisory meetings and create the five main themes that would go on to be the course titles. By inviting individuals from all across the islands and beyond, the HGI attempted to capture all perspectives and interests in the program design and grounded the program in values and priorities found on Haida Gwaii. Based on the questions participants were asked in the lead up to the advisory committee meeting, there were tangible opportunities for the program to be grounded in community by asking participants what their vision was for reconciliation, among other topics (for more information on the RSS planning, please see 4.2.2 Development of Reconciliation Studies Semester). Similarly, to the strength of planning meetings with locals making the process more participatory, allowing the curriculum to be co-developed between Haida locals and off-islanders ensured that Haida perspectives would be included into the semester. Keeping in mind that there is not one single

Haida perspective and that no two individuals have the same lived experience, allowing Haida voices into the RSS provided additional perspectives beyond simply what students might receive in a conventional university course.

In addition to including Haida laws and perspectives, and creating a participatory process, designing the semester in this way also resulted in the chance to build a program that was uniquely situated in the cross-cultural and dynamic realities of Haida Gwaii. There are many issues and initiatives at a variety of scales that have the potential to affect the day-to-day activities on Haida Gwaii. From the joint management of Gwaii Haanas, to the ongoing Haida title case in the Supreme Court, Haida Gwaii offers significant opportunities to explore the complexities of reconciliation and Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities working together for common goals and finding ways to make things work despite disagreements. Incorporating Haida Gwaii perspectives into these discussions at the earliest stages of program design allows for more opportunities to bring in unique cases from Haida Gwaii into the classroom and ground the education in the program's context. Bringing together local and off-island experts in this way is an example of co-evolution, because had this combination of individuals been different, the program might have taken an entirely different form (Patton, 2010). The program co-evolved as the various experts and stakeholders collaboratively developed the program and course curricula (Patton, 2010). In this way, the interaction of individuals at the initial planning phases created an emergent property of the RSS in its current form (Flood, 2010; Patton, 2010).

The initial planning phases of the RSS also coincided with a new executive director coming into the organization in 2015. This change in leadership also corresponded to the development of the 2016-2020 five year strategic plan. These two factors together led to the organization exploring

new avenues and opportunities for growth, such as expanding the semester programs into different communities on Haida Gwaii beyond *Hlgaagilda* Skidegate and *Daa'jing Giids* Queen Charlotte. This momentum is marked not only by the RSS planning in 2015, but also by discussions on the Marine Conservation semester in 2016, and the creation of two new Haida Gwaii Summer Sessions in 2018. Prior to these expansions, the programs had gone largely unchanged since 2013 when the Natural Resource Science semester was created. This unprecedented growth appears to be attributable to the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan and presents future opportunities for growth within the organization. The existing structure and operations of the HGI, in combination with the dialogue around reconciliation and the growth mandate from the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan, all collectively created the initial starting conditions that exerted significant influence on the development of the RSS (McGowan et al., 2017). The alignment of norms and values at the landscape and regime levels is found here in regards to reconciliation-focused programming, and this concept is also found across other successful social innovations (Moore, 2017).

## **6.9 Interim Year**

The 2016 year of the HGI had initially yielded more questions than insights. There was a large amount of documentation for the planning stages in 2015, from meeting minutes to schedules to promotional materials distributed to the communities. For the two years the program was offered, I worked alongside the HGI so I was privy to documentation and participant observation to understand the events that took place in detail. In 2016, the focus of the HGI was fundraising to have the financial means to offer the RSS. Because of the financial constraints on the organization, and the conclusion of the Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT) grant, which was funding the Academic Lead position within the HGI, the organization entered a

transition period. This transition can be attributed to a greater focus on fundraising and financial sustainability from the HGI, as well as an ongoing capacity issue faced by an organization operating in a small, rural, inter-cultural community.

The underlying model for the HGI was to create economic diversification opportunities on Haida Gwaii while simultaneously creating opportunities for local students to study on Haida Gwaii and building local capacity within communities. However, the high costs of living and small student base means that the HGI operates at a financial deficit. In previous years, this was largely offset with grants and other publicly available funding in order to keep the programs financially viable. When these grants ended, the HGI found themselves unable to offer full-time funding for the Academic Lead position while continuing to run the programs they were already offering. A large amount of effort was put in to finding new sources of funding, and as a result, efforts related to ongoing engagement with communities and planning activities decreased. As well, 2016 was a large planning stage for the Marine Conservation Semester, scheduled to take place in 2020 in Sandspit. Cumulatively, these events resulted in a lack of documentation immediately available on the events pertaining to the RSS that took place in 2016.

As well, as described in the program summaries, there was a large amount of activity taking place in 2016 while the curriculum was being finalized. As pipelines began to be approved, and the momentum following the release of the TRC report began to slow, it is likely that the tone of conversations around reconciliation shifted. Without ongoing efforts in cultivating these relationships with community members, they will not flourish on their own. The HGI was in the process of creating a program that was to be offered in two communities that were relatively unfamiliar with the organization and its programs. Although students in the other semesters often travel up to Gaw Tlagee Masset and *Old Massett* on their free time, and occasionally travel north

for field trips with the courses, there had not been a consistent presence of the HGI in these communities before the RSS was proposed. Because of these unforeseen pressures, moving into the program years there was a break in momentum, and a brief pause in communication between the activities in the community and the conversations happening within the HGI. The adjacent possible is that there would have been a person filling this role in a consistent capacity throughout the interim planning phases. Although no definitive claims can be made about the impact this might have had on the program, using systems tools to think about the adjacent possible might yield insights about how capacity issues related to operating in a small, inter-cultural rural community affect program implementation. The fact that the Academic Lead position went unfilled is not solely due to financial constraints, but also heavily speaks to the fact that the small population size of Haida Gwaii means there is often a deficit of highly qualified people to fill all the specialized roles across the islands. An individual leaving an organization may not appear to have a particularly strong impact, but appears to have had an impact on the RSS when considering the fact that there may not be the appropriate person on Haida Gwaii to step in and fill that role. The magnitude of this impact is an example of non-linearity, in which a relatively small action has a much larger impact that was unpredictable and unplanned on the system (Lansing, 2003; Patton, 2010; Westley & Laban, 2012). The small population size and personnel base meant that the HGI were unable to find someone suitable to fill this role, which may have influenced program uptake and reception in the following years.

## 6.10 Program Pilots – 2017-18

*"The Canadian state was founded on colonial genocidal policies that are inextricably linked to Canada's contemporary relationship with Indigenous peoples"*

National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019, p. 24

After the release of the TRC's final report, many stories about the realities of residential schools became public. It is imperative that all students in Canada learn these stories and properly understand the history of colonialism in Canada. This is a large part of why the "First Nations and Canada (Re)writing History" is offered at the beginning of the RSS. Students need to establish a baseline understanding of history from multiple perspectives in order to unpack concepts related to reconciliation and Indigenous sovereignty in the later courses. However, for students learning about the complexities of reconciliation and the history of assimilation and colonization in Canada, this information can cause a disorienting dilemma in their existing understanding of Indigenous people (Castleden et al., 2013). For some students, the content they are exposed to in the semester might be their first opportunity to learn about some of the injustices committed against Indigenous people in Canada. Anger and frustration at the overall system that we currently still live in are emotions that appeared to be present amongst the students by the end of the term during the final evaluation.

Another factor that contributed to the program's reception was the high-level discussions and conversations around reconciliation happening across the country. By 2017, the dialogue around reconciliation at a national level had shifted and become more cynical, partly attributable to the federal government's promises of reconciliation and a cease in pipeline development which did not materialize in the way many might have pictured. Students entering into the program in 2017 likely had a different perception of the role of government and non-Indigenous people in



advancing reconciliation efforts than if the program had piloted in 2015 when the discussions were largely positive. As a result, the word reconciliation had likely become more charged and contentious than when it was first used in the reports and findings from the TRC.

Part of the challenge in offering timely education in the realm of reconciliation is that there are two processes working on very different timelines from one another. On the one hand, there are conversations happening across the country at all levels of government, discussions on incorporating Indigenous knowledge into education, and public discourse on reconciliation as both a term and as a larger process. These conversations have changed rapidly since the TRC released its final report in 2015, and they are subject to frequent fluctuations in perception depending on who is using the word “reconciliation” and in what context. On the other hand, the HGI is working as an organization that is embedded within the bureaucracy of UBC. Course syllabi often have to be submitted for senate approval 1-2 years before the courses are offered. The syllabi and terms used in 2015 were appropriate at the time, but the dialogue has shifted even just in the past few years (Laucius, 2017). The alignment found in values around reconciliation in 2015 across the national (landscape) and organization (regime) scales does not appear to be in place two years later when the program piloted (Moore, 2017).

Despite these challenges related to high-level discussions that could not have been predicted from the onset but likely influenced program uptake, there are some significant positive aspects to the program and its unique context at the time. The discussions around logging protests, around the Haida title case, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities working side by side created several tangible case studies for the students to learn about and experience first-hand. These cases provide complex, on the ground examples of the challenges around reconciliation in a modern context, particularly in remote, resource dependent communities. This

type of programming does fundamentally benefit from taking place in an environment such as Haida Gwaii. Part of the appeal of the Haida Gwaii Semester programs is the fact that Haida Gwaii as a place provides grounded examples of the work students are interested in. From natural resource management and conservation, to Indigenous rights and reconciliation, the communities of Haida Gwaii provide a classroom much better than most four-walled university environments in major metropolitan cities.

### **6.10.1 Contextually-Dependent Challenges**

A challenge encountered once the RSS had piloted was that the organization was unknown to some people in the community. The cultural sensitivity required to ensure that these relationships are meaningful and mutually beneficial is not an easy task, and required a nuanced understanding of the communities, their histories, and any other contextually sensitive information. As would happen with any new program piloting in a new community, there were some members of the community who knew relatively little about the HGI or the RSS. Despite the fact that the HGI offered meetings and public events in the community throughout the planning and design phases, there was often a low attendance and, despite their best efforts, not all people in the communities of *G̱aw Tlagee Masset* and *Old Massett* were aware of the organization. Although some students, particularly in the first year, had mentioned that the program was relatively unknown to many people in the community and they found themselves fielding questions about the program and the organization (and often feeling unequipped to do so), this is likely an unavoidable consequence of offering a new program in new communities. Through public events, materials prepared for students before the program, and a beginning of term orientation, the HGI attempted to equip students with adequate knowledge about the program and organization, and made

ongoing efforts to engage with as many community members as possible before and during program launch.

### **6.10.2 Classroom Pedagogy**

One of the biggest successes of the HGI programs is the landscape in which they are offered. The environment outside of the conventional classroom provides ample spaces for grounding learning in the specific context of Haida Gwaii. Not only does this align with Indigenous pedagogy of teachings from the land, but it also recognizes the particular context of the programs as integral to its content. Beyond the physical spaces in proximity to the classroom, access to community educators who are experts in Haida and Haida Gwaii knowledge provides contextually relevant examples and discussions that would not take place in another environment with the same level of depth and insight. This overall exemplifies a level of sensitivity to the context, in which the programs are grounded in the spaces, places, and people of Haida Gwaii.

In both years the RSS was offered, all of the courses were taught by local instructors. In the 2017 year of the program, all courses were co-taught between local Haida instructors and off-island instructors who were predominantly affiliated with UBC. The rationale for the teaching teams was partly since they were involved in the curriculum design, and also to ensure that Haida voices and perspectives were integrated into classroom content while simultaneously UBC meeting teaching requirements. While the other HGI programs, and their respective courses, are also taught, or co-taught by Haida, locals from Haida Gwaii, and off-island instructors, due to local community capacity, not every course has the opportunity to be taught by a Haida or a local from Haida Gwaii.

Although not explicitly advertised, the HGI utilizes the practices found in Two-Eyed Seeing. Through integrating Indigenous and Haida knowledge, perspectives, and pedagogies into their programs, the HGI have allowed students typically coming from the Western worldview to have their knowledge juxtaposed against another (Indigenous) worldview, without making value judgments about whether or not one is superior to the other (Hatcher et al., 2009).

As well, central to all Haida Gwaii Semesters is the use of community educators, those of Haida ancestry and residents of Haida Gwaii, to supplement course curriculum offered by the primary instructor. In each semester, community educators are brought in as much as possible, and often average out to at least 50 guests per semester. This overall approach to instructors and community educators introduces more perspectives into the classroom, and opens up the space and opportunity to teach students about Haida laws, knowledge, and ways of knowing. This strengthens the uptake of the concepts and topics the students are learning by grounding it in real-world case studies and examples from the Haida Gwaii context, and also allows for more Haida voices and stories to make their way into the classroom. These guest speakers will often take students out onto the land and into the communities for their “lectures”. This pedagogical approach embeds knowledge in place and embodies Indigenous pedagogy by moving education outside the walls of a conventional classroom setting (Hatcher et al., 2009; Iwama et al., 2009). Although the other Haida Gwaii Semester programs in Natural Resources easily align with outdoor field trips and activities, students in the RSS were still taken out onto the land and into the communities throughout the duration of the semester. Although community educators were brought in many times throughout the program, some students still expressed a desire to have more of their learning take place explicitly in outdoor contexts. The main classroom of the RSS

was a small longhouse located in Old Massett, which presents an alternative classroom space than the typical university setting.

Since the literature around Indigenous pedagogy often talks about the importance of the land as the first teacher (Rosano, 2017; Simpson, 2014; Tuck, McKenzie, & McCoy, 2014), bringing students outside the four walls of the classroom and onto the land offers the opportunity for students to ground their learning in practice and Haida pedagogy. Regarding land as the first teacher assists in decolonizing education and creates appropriate spaces to learn about Haida knowledge and worldviews (Ahenakew, 2016; Bang et al., 2014). Although it is important to spend as much time as possible on the land, learning from the environment and embodying Haida pedagogies, many community spaces are not large enough to host a group of 22 students. To combat this, guest speakers were often brought into the classroom to speak to the students in a space of sufficient size. Moreover, there is a challenge in finding activities and spaces which are relevant to the content of the courses, and the classroom often provides the most effective environment for these discussions. Although not all of these talks were able to take place on the land, the use community educators throughout the term assisted in grounding the course content in the context of Haida Gwaii.

### **6.10.3 Student Recruitment and Advertising**

As mentioned previously, the use of the term reconciliation in the title of the semester prompted discussions amongst the students. As with any program, the way the semester is titled and advertised largely affects who will apply and participate in the program. Using the term “reconciliation”, while an effective buzzword, is also fraught with confusion and conflicting definitions. Although students sign up with “reconciliation” being the term used in advertising, it appears by the end of the term the students develop a nuanced understanding of the contentious

nature of the term. In the pilot semester, some students mentioned that at the beginning of each course or guest lecture, a significant portion of time would be spent unpacking the term and why it may or may not be appropriate. Students enroll in the semester because they are interested about the topic of reconciliation and want to learn more about the activities happening on Haida Gwaii. The program successfully teaches students about the complexities of reconciliation and provides perspectives that they may have never been exposed to. As a result of this “unlearning” of the current state of reconciliation, students are equipped with the language and understanding to start asking the more difficult questions surrounding the term itself and the way it is used in contemporary discussions throughout Canada (Davis et al., 2016).

The advertisements for the HGI display students in high-visibility vests and hardhats, out in the forests, mountains and the shorelines. However, the advertisements for the RSS used the Reconciliation Pole as their image, which was intended to demonstrate that the program would not be the same as other HGI semester programs. The success of the block course structure made it a logical pedagogical approach for the HGI, especially considering the fact that block-style courses are advertised as a selling feature of the HGI semesters. As the HGI state on their website, “this model provides a great opportunity for developing connections with instructors, deeper focus, and overall retention of content” (Haida Gwaii Institute, 2019e). This block model has been successful, but assuming this approach from the outset can be considered path dependence – in which many aspects of the program were pre-determined based on characteristics of the HGI (McCarthy, 2017). However, the block course model is the most successful option for the HGI, given that instructors often come from off-island and have to make arrangements to take three weeks off to come teach courses.

#### 6.10.4 Exploring Options for Program Evaluation

The debrief for the pilot 2017 semester was carefully crafted based on the existing evaluation model, to capture existing student concerns and provide insight into questions HGI staff had. The structure used for this evaluation was the same as had been successfully used in the Natural Resource Science and Studies semesters in all previous years. These factors, in combination with the fact that new evaluation materials had specifically been crafted to capture and explore previously voiced students concerns, meant there was a high level of confidence with the evaluation strategy that had been chosen.

In November 2017, I participated in a series of phone calls with the HGI with the intent to modify the existing evaluation materials to suit the specific content of the RSS. There were also specific questions the HGI staff had about the RSS which they sought answers for; some to do with the naming of the program and others to do with the student experience in the community. Although time constraints did not allow for the HGI to articulate program-specific principles prior to the completion of the program, there were pieces of the organization's design that had the potential to turn into loose principles for evaluation. What we undertook in the fall of 2017 was creating a world café exercise – in which five general questions were written onto large pieces of paper that reflected the five values of the HGI. Students were asked to reflect on these questions and write down their responses, moving through all five stations and building on what had previously been written. The five values of the HGI are as follows:

- **Respect:** HGI and the programs we deliver are based on the principle of mutual respect, for each other and for the ecosystem of which we are part. HGI respects and learns from the leadership of the Haida Nation and all the people and communities on Haida Gwaii

- **Contribution:** by making higher education available in Haida Gwaii, HGI contributes to community diversification, vibrancy, and well-being. We contribute to the education of our community and enrich the lives of the people who come to Haida Gwaii, from across Canada and the world, to study and teach.
- **Collaboration:** Our community and place-based approach to education provides individuals the opportunity to learn from local knowledge-holders in addition to their instructors. Bringing together diverse groups of people to work and learn together fosters new ideas and innovative solutions.
- **Excellence:** HGI strives for excellence in all our programming and aims to distinguish our organization internationally for providing exceptional transformative educational experiences.
- **Integrity:** HGI subscribes to rigorous ethical standards, delivers on our promises, and is transparent and accountable to our students, instructors, and the partners and supporters who make our work possible.

These values were modified slightly and turned into questions that were used to explore whether or not the HGI was meeting these organizational-level values in the RSS. The questions were as follows:

- **Respect:** Yaghudangang [Respect] is a core value guiding the Haida Gwaii Semesters. How do you now understand and practice respect in your academic and personal life?
- **Contribution:** Describe how you applied your learning to make a positive contribution throughout the semester. Reflect on how you will apply what you've learned to make a positive contribution at home.



- **Collaboration:** As HGS students, you interacted with classmates, local knowledge-holders, instructors, and community-members throughout the semester. What did you learn and/or what will you take away from these experiences?
- **Excellence:** What parts of your experience as an HGS student would you describe as excellent?
- **Integrity:** Thinking back on your time as an HGS student, reflect on whether you would describe experiences in the program as integral to, or building on, one other to shape your learning journey. Are there any experiences that were particularly interconnected or disjointed that stand out to you?

These values guide the operations of the HGI and serve as a useful starting point for a deeper evaluation of the program and its implications. Adapting the existing evaluation package to meet organizational requests allowed for some specific RSS-related questions to be explored.

However, there was a missed opportunity to create an entirely new evaluation package that would be uniquely tailored to the RSS. When we as a team began discussions around evaluating the 2017 pilot semester, we encountered the challenge that the evaluation had not been developed simultaneously with the curriculum. Co-developed curriculum and evaluation was a goal of the HGI in 2015, and was intended to be funded by the SSHRC Insight Grant. As mentioned in the 2015 program summary, the HGI had partnered with the University of Waterloo and several other partners on a SSHRC grant with the intention of developing new forms of program evaluation to complement the RSS, which at the time had yet to be developed. Unfortunately, due to the fact that the grant application was not successful until 2017, the evaluation expertise was unable to be brought in until the program was already in the midst of being piloted. We created an evaluation team, which met numerous times throughout the fall of

2017 to determine the best evaluand for the RSS. Although we were unable to determine a single evaluand that was the perfect match, we chose to use the values of the organization as a proxy for high-level program evaluation.

Currently, the mission statement for the HGI is:

*“Transformative education inspired by Haida Gwaii”*

HGI, 2018

This mission statement appears to fall in line with principles-focused programming, since “a principles driven mission describes *how* the work will be done” [emphasis added] (Patton, 2018, p. 123). Through transformative education approaches and pedagogy, the HGI strives to provide opportunities that are based on the people, beings, lands, and waters of Haida Gwaii. If transformative education is indeed the goal, then the evaluation can be geared to measure whether or not transformative learning is taking place. The HGI has readily acknowledged that a 3-4 month semester program does not necessarily offer a sufficient length of time for a full transformative learning experience to take place. However, there are still early markers of this journey, such as the disorienting dilemma, that could be catalogued at the end of the program (Mezirow, 1978). If these early markers are identified, follow-up evaluation could then take place in the months to years following the program to capture the full extent of this learning journey. While this does require additional capacity and a greater workload for HGI staff, it is essential to track the “success” of the program if transformative education continues to be the goal of all HGI programming and the RSS.

When it came to offering the program evaluation for the RSS in December 2017, I was fortunate enough to be on Haida Gwaii and was invited to assist in facilitating discussion and taking notes.

Despite the extensive planning that went into creating the evaluation, it became apparent once we entered the classroom space and began working through our debrief activities that the students did not necessarily agree with our approach and would have preferred alternative methods to providing feedback. As we began explaining the various activities, there did not appear to be substantial buy-in for the structure of the debrief. As one student asked “have you ever had the students decide how they would like to provide feedback?” we as a team realized we would have to change gears if we wanted to accurately capture the students’ perception. Rather than carrying on with our scheduled methods, which were not appearing to land with the students, we instead opened up the room to free-form dialogue between the students and the HGI staff. This was not anticipated from the outset, as the existing debrief structure had worked well for the other HGI semester programs. In hindsight, approaching new programs with a more open evaluation structure, or speaking to students ahead of time about appropriate evaluation methods and techniques might have increased student participation and buy-in and reduce the tension around the end of term evaluation session. This does not have to be an “either-or” scenario, in which the evaluation should solely be dictated by the HGI or the students. This blended approach to evaluation was incorporated in the 2018 year of the program, described below.

#### **6.10.5 Improvements Between Years**

As described in the 2018 program summary, the HGI made several procedural changes before the 2018 offering of the RSS. This willingness to adapt displays the HGI’s understanding of the complex environment their programs operate within. Adaptability is a central piece within developmental evaluation, and is also one of the underlying principles of complex adaptive systems (Nicholls, Simon, & Gabriel, 2015; Patton, 2010). Adapting to unforeseen circumstances aids social innovations, such as the RSS, in improving and growing over time (Nicholls et al.,

2015). Moreover, the changes made between the two years are the direct result of the system elements – including the students, instructors, community members, and courses themselves – interacting with one another and yielding new insights (Patton, 2010).

The first significant change was rearranging some of the instructors as the result of some teaching teams not working well in the classroom. Preference was still given to Haida and local instructors, but the mandatory nature of co-teaching each course was removed. Similar to 2017, nearly 50 community educators were incorporated into the program to supplement the instructors' knowledge and provide additional perspectives to students. Another significant improvement was changing the end of term evaluation approach. In the 2017 semester, the student feedback was collected in a very similar structure to the Natural Resource Studies and Natural Resource Science semesters. Pieces of the evaluation were re-worked to definitively capture student feedback that had been informally discussed throughout the term, but the overall structure and timeline of this evaluation remained largely unchanged. Based on feedback on the evaluation itself and reflection by HGI staff, individual and small group discussions with a staff member was used as the primary methods of capturing semester feedback. This made the evaluation more participatory in that all students were given the opportunity to speak directly to staff and voice their feedback about the program, as opposed to providing feedback in a group setting where not all voices may be equally heard. The intent was that this approach to the evaluation might be more beneficial to both the students and the organization. Although the program remained largely unchanged in pedagogy and content between the two years, the form of the evaluation itself changed to allow students a more intimate setting to discuss program strengths and weaknesses with the staff. Students were given the package of surveys that are standard for all HGI semesters to fill out ahead of time, and came in to provide program-specific

comments in individual and group settings with a staff member. This approach blended the structured evaluation that has been customary for the HGI while also providing students with additional feedback mechanisms that might be a better fit.

Finally, to help cultivate a participatory learning environment, the HGI began developing community agreements amongst each class cohort in 2018. First rolled out in the winter 2018 Natural Resource Studies semester, these agreements are collaboratively created amongst the students in the program during the first day of the semester. The agreements are intended to create a “binding” protocol for conduct both within the classroom and in the broader community. This process, left open to the students to negotiate and work through, is highly participatory and also cultivates responsibility and accountability amongst the students to one another and themselves. The students are given little guidance, and are tasked with opening up conversations about what a respectful classroom environment looks like, how to deal with disagreements and discussions that may be challenging or triggering, and creating other guidelines and principles for classroom etiquette. This process helps to create a supportive social environment for students to unlearn old ways of knowing and learn about new perspectives (Castleden et al., 2013; Kasworm & Bowles, 2012). Moreover, a space in which students feel accepted and safe to express their feelings can be essential for a successful transformative learning experience (Taylor & Snyder, 2012). Overall, the HGI learned from the feedback from the 2017 semester and strove to improve on the program in the 2018 offering of the RSS.

## 6.11 Moving Forward

*“The essence of a conciliation project is individual transformation: living with this history and, hopefully, engaging in perpetual conciliation. There is no end result, no conclusion or assimilation, only the Haudenosaunee’s river of life with irreconcilable camps on either side and a wide zone of trade and sharing between”*

Garneau, 2012, p. 38

When new funding was obtained to build capacity within the HGI, a new position was created with the title “Indigenous and Community Initiatives Manager”. The role of this position is to specifically work with members of the community to develop meaningful relationships and programs that offer benefits to both the organization and the communities. Although some local students enroll in the programs, the majority of students that attend HGI programming are from off-island. While one of the main intents of the HGI is economic diversification, an equally important goal is providing educational opportunities for local students and building capacity within Haida Gwaii communities. The challenge of attracting local students to the program links back to issues of capacity. The small population of Haida Gwaii means that the graduating class of students each year is very small. Not all students that graduate choose to pursue post-secondary education, and those that do may not be interested in the content being offered through the HGI. The “Indigenous and Community Initiatives Manager” position is intended to work with the communities and continue to find opportunities to allow local students to come back to study on Haida Gwaii.

The overarching model of the HGI semester program has shown to be successful for nearly a decade and as such has remained relatively unchanged across those years. Feedback from student evaluations and discussions in each semester program are considered and incorporated into future iterations to improve on this successful model. While there was no feedback that

suggested for an alternative pedagogical model for the RSS, it could be argued that the organizational path dependence played a role in the decision to use the traditional HGI semester model for the RSS. This path dependence influenced the structure of the RSS, which may have been designed differently had the HGI not been offering programs for over eight years before the RSS was launched. However, the existence of the HGI and their other semester programs likely provided the necessary starting conditions to be able to conceptualize and offer a program in reconciliation on Haida Gwaii. Students coming to study in a new place for the first time will likely want to spend as much time exploring outdoors as possible. However, the HGI offers community-based courses, not specifically field courses. Almost every afternoon throughout the semester the students would either have a community educator come in for a guest lecture, or they would have a community based field trip. The fact that students felt there was too much time in the classroom can also be attributable to the weather during the semester. The RSS ran in the fall, and October to December are the months with the highest levels of precipitation on the islands and cooler temperatures (Climate-Data.org, n.d.). Although students tend to ask for as much outdoor time as possible, this is limited by weather constraints, physical space, and whether or not the lecture content aligns with the surroundings. This presents a significant opportunity for growth in the coming years. Looking at Indigenous pedagogy, which encourages learning on the land as much as possible, Haida Gwaii's landscape offers many different physical spaces to offer teachings beyond the confines of the classroom. While field trips take place in all HGI programs, finding ways to take classroom learning outside the walls of the buildings not only helps students connect course concepts with the real world, but also aligns with Indigenous pedagogical underpinnings.

As the HGI expands its presence across the islands of Haida Gwaii, it will continue to be important to understand the complexity of the organization and the larger context. What constitutes a successful program in one community in a certain subject may not have similar results in a different community. This understanding is present within the organization, since they have decided not to offer the RSS in its current form in 2019. Instead, they are redesigning new programming that ground reconciliation in action within the communities of Gaw Tlagee *Masset* and *Old Massett*. The intent is that the experience of piloting the RSS will generate important insights that will be used to improve future programming in all communities on Haida Gwaii.

## **6.12 Limitations**

*“Transformative change, the goal of social innovation, requires the long time lines, the tension between general ordering and disordering forces, and distributed agency, much of which would be missing if we took short term cases, or limited ourselves to a linear pathway of development.”*

McGowan & Westley, 2017, p. 105

Although I have based my analysis of the HGI and the RSS as it functioning as a complex adaptive system or social innovation, this analysis is limited by the short time-frame of this case study. Unlike the cases used in *The Evolution of Social Innovation*, which have occurred over decades to centuries, the HGI has only been around for 10 years, and the RSS only piloted twice, for three and a half months each over a two year period. The above quote describes that looking at transformative change requires a long timeline, something that is not present in this case. The cases used in *The Evolution of Social Innovation* occurred over time scales ranging from decades to centuries (Westley et al., 2017). A timeframe of four years is likely insufficient to explore the



full evolution of any social innovation and its implications. A “successful” social innovation is one which crosses scales, moving from niche spaces into the larger regime and landscape scales of influence (Moore, 2017). Given the four year time frame, it is unknowable at this point what the RSS will look like in future years and what influence it will have at larger scales beyond the HGI.

Despite the fact that the RSS cannot be fully conceptualized as a social innovation over a long time frame, I do believe that mapping out the chronology across scales provides a useful visual for program evaluation. The RSS experienced challenges that were not immediately apparent when the program was created. Understanding the underlying causes behind these challenges may require looking across scales in order to determine what has changed between years that may be influencing program success. The discussions with the HGI that led to using social innovation concepts as an analytical tool indicated that they were eager to explore the context outside of the program, to understand what activities at a broader landscape level may be playing a role in activities in the classroom. Being embedded in the day-to-day operations of the program and the organization meant the staff did not have the luxury or opportunity to step back and examine the broader picture, but was determined to be beneficial as they moved forward with program evaluation.

The purpose of this work was initially to assist in the program evaluation of the RSS as it ran for two pilot years. It has evolved into an exploration of the strengths and weaknesses of the RSS processes and evaluation based on criteria for best practice. Ultimately, this research began with the intention that the program would continue to run and operate as a semester in reconciliation studies. Although the HGI is intending to change the direction of the program towards courses oriented around community resilience and systems transformation, the findings from this

programming are still significant. Not only do the lessons from the RSS yield insight into improving future programming for any organization on Haida Gwaii, but they also provide examples of the complexities any organization might face while trying to offer cross-cultural or experiential programming while working in a rural, intercultural community.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.1 Conclusions**

The first objective of this research was to develop a framework in which to analyze programs undertaking cross-cultural transformative education and evaluation in complex, adaptive environments. Although there are no other program environments identical to the Haida Gwaii Institute (HGI), there are field schools across Canada that aim to offer alternative approaches to education. Due to the fact that one of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) calls to action was to integrate Indigenous pedagogies into classrooms, even field schools which are current based entirely in Western knowledge could benefit from exploring ways of including Indigenous voices and ways of knowing into their programs. As well, since field schools aim to provide experiential education which extends beyond the traditional classroom environment, there are opportunities to explore the extent of transformative learning experiences regardless of program content (Castleden et al., 2013). This framework can be applied to field schools across Canada which are providing transformative learning experiences to students and are seeking to integrate Indigenous and cross-cultural approaches into their programs. In developing this theoretical framework, several key findings came out that can be regarded as central tenets of best practice:

- The processes should be participatory: this can occur in a variety of ways, from including the larger community in the classroom whenever possible (Castleden et al., 2013; Tuck et al., 2014), to opening up discussions for students to have greater agency over their learning (Poth et al., 2012; Rey et al., 2014; Shilling, 2002), to expanding program evaluation to include as many voices and perspectives as possible (Johnston, 2013; LaFrance & Nichols, 2008; Lavallee, 2009). Increasing the program's buy-in from

students and community members in this way will maximize program benefits by ensuring as many voices as possible are included in the program and its evaluation.

- Indigenous worldviews and pedagogies should be considered: education occurring in a cross-cultural context should seek to challenge or bring into question the dominant Western pedagogy that many students exclusively experience in school (Ahenakew, 2016; Lavallee, 2009). Bringing in elders to teach and share their knowledge (Axworthy et al., 2016; Castleden et al., 2013), returning the education out onto the land (Bang et al., 2014; McKeon, 2012; Scully, 2012), and bridging the epistemological divide through the use of Two-Eyed Seeing (Bartlett et al., 2012; Hatcher et al., 2009; Iwama et al., 2009) are some tools that can be used in the classroom to ensure that Indigenous cultures are being respected and incorporated into the program.
- There should be a clearly defined evaluand: any program planning to undertake program evaluation as part of its activities must have a clear goal of what the evaluation is to explore (Patton, 2010, 2018). This is not limited to program outcomes, and can include program or organizational principles, a general program trajectory, or particular learning experiences (Kasworm & Bowles, 2012; Patton, 2018; Stuckey et al., 2013). Not only will this improve the program's evaluation, but clearly articulating an evaluand can help clarify a thematic arc or intention and lead to a more robust program overall.
- Build in sensitivity and responsiveness to context and complexity: any program, regardless of its content, does not operate in a vacuum. Particularly in cross-cultural contexts or classrooms fostering transformative learning, the dynamics of the larger community and discussions around course content can largely impact program success (Duit & Galaz, 2008; Snyder, 2008; Westley & Laban, 2012). Failure to recognize

complexity in both program and evaluation design can diminish the impact that the larger landscape has on program success and value (Boal & Schultz, 2007; Patton, 2010).

Allowing for flexibility in teaching methods, opening up space for unexpected conversations and speakers, and building in adaptability into program design are all ways to manage complexity in the program.

Once this framework was developed based on theoretical literature-based evidence, it was applied to the Haida Gwaii Institute's (HGI) Reconciliation Studies Semester (RSS). Through two years of participant observation, meetings, conversations, and document review, the information collected was examined through the lens of this best-practice framework. The second objective was to use the theoretical framework to evaluate the RSS and provide some recommendations based on the program and its unique context. Some key findings from this analysis were:

- Through the use of local educators, guest speakers, and a curriculum co-developed by local Haida experts, residents of Haida Gwaii, and off-island educators, the HGI created a program that included a variety of voices from the Haida and Haida Gwaii communities. Students were able to learn about a variety of grounded case studies from Haida Gwaii and speak to experts involved in many of the activities the Haida Nation are undertaking to assert sovereignty over their lands and waters. The development of a community agreement and an open-ended evaluation in the second year of the program sought to make the classroom more participatory and provide students with greater agency in classroom etiquette and semester feedback.
- The largest opportunity for improvement with the RSS is to clearly develop an evaluation, and to build evaluation into overall program design to ensure that the program is meeting

some pre-set principles or mandates. The evaluand for the program does not have to be learning objectives, but must be measurable or evaluable in some way in order to have utility. Developmental evaluation and principles-focused evaluation are two useful frameworks which can be used to assist in determining and describing the program evaluand and how best to undertake program evaluation.

- The conversations surrounding reconciliation and Indigenous issues at a provincial and national level fluctuated throughout the four years of program design and implementation. Although well-intentioned when it was conceptualized in 2015, the RSS that piloted in 2017 was operating in a different sociopolitical landscape related to reconciliation.

## **7.2 Recommendations**

### **7.2.1 Conceptual Recommendations**

These conceptual recommendations are the result of my literature review and subsequent conceptual framework. Through developing a framework that would apply to the RSS context, as well as programs offering similar programs, there were two areas of literature that I was not able to find large amounts of information on. These areas were: the use of social innovation descriptions for program evaluation purposes, and the application of Indigenous evaluation practices for cross-cultural education.

1. Further explore social innovation mapping as a tool for program evaluation

Although developmental evaluation utilizes complexity concepts and is tailored to work well in environments with high levels of uncertainty, the use of social innovation tools for program evaluation does not appear to be well documented. Social innovation tools were used throughout

this research in preliminary ways to understand how the RSS evolved within the HGI and its broader cultural and social context. Due to the fact that the program has only run for two years, it is a limited time frame to fully evaluate the evolution of the program. More research is needed to document how social innovation concepts, such as path-dependence and prophetic starting conditions, can be used in program evaluation. The existing literature on social innovation is described in the literature review. However, there was little information available on whether or not social innovation mapping had been successfully applied to program evaluation.

## 2. Continue to explore Indigenous-based evaluation approaches for cross-cultural education

There is a relative dearth of information pertaining to Indigenous-specific evaluation methods when compared to “conventional” Western evaluation practice. Important to note is that there is no single Indigenous evaluation, and that all nations and cultures will have their own protocols and practices for program evaluation. However, some common themes found in Indigenous evaluation are stakeholder empowerment, context-sensitivity, and the integration of culture. As the field of literature continues to expand around common protocols or principles for undertaking evaluation in Indigenous contexts, it is important to see how and where these are being applied in cross-cultural contexts.

### **7.2.2 Evaluation Recommendations**

These recommendations were developed over the course of the three years I worked alongside the HGI in piloting the RSS. Because my initial intention was to develop an evaluation package for the RSS, I explored what components would be needed to develop a successful and comprehensive program evaluation. In doing so, I encountered specific obstacles related to developing evaluation that can be explored and improved upon for future HGI programming.

These recommendations can also be transferrable to similar programs hoping to develop and undertake program evaluation.

1. Define evaluation from the onset to improve the development of subsequent program evaluation

As described in the Results and Analysis chapter, a challenge we encountered as a team was developing evaluation after the semester was underway. This arose due to the unsuccessful SSHRC Insight Grant Application in 2015 and 2016, which intended to provide expertise to co-develop evaluation alongside program curriculum. The ideal scenario was that the 2015 grant would have been successful, allowing program evaluation to have been developed over the two years prior to piloting the program. Since as a team, we were unable to bring in evaluation expertise until 2017, we worked as a team in the fall of 2017 to tailor the existing evaluation materials to suit the specific content of the RSS. The existing evaluation package, developed in 2013, had been used by the Natural Resource Studies and Natural Resource Science semesters successfully over the last four years. Using this package as a baseline, we determined which pieces of student feedback the HGI were most interested in obtaining through multiple rounds of discussion over a period of two months. We used this as a guide to modify the existing evaluation package, add new questions and surveys for the students, and used the mission statement and values of the HGI to broadly explore how these were being embodied in the classroom. These value statements inherently have some underlying principles, and continuing to refine and clearly articulate them can bring more coherence to the overall program evaluation. With the SSHRC Insight Grant still underway, there is the opportunity to continue to articulate and refine these principles, which can create a useful metric for evaluation (Patton, 2018).



## 2. Explore Stuckey et al. (2013) survey on evaluating transformative learning experiences

Since the HGI follows pedagogical practices from transformative learning theory, an alternative approach to evaluation is to explore the possibility of implementing the survey created by Stuckey and others in 2013. This survey, described in the Literature Review, has been piloted once already. The authors noted that the next step would be sampling a large amount of individuals from various programs and spaces to continue testing the reliability and applicability (Stuckey et al., 2013). While there is more to the HGI programs than strictly cultivating a transformative learning experience, this survey presents an opportunity to explicitly evaluate the learning experiences of students and make adjustments to the semesters if necessary. This recommendation is not a requirement, but the survey developed does present a template for how to evaluate the transformative learning experience of students if that continues to be an underlying premise to HGI programming (as stated in their mission statement).

## 3. When undertaking future program design, co-develop evaluation simultaneously

Related to identifying an evaluand at the beginning of a program, it is also imperative to consider *how and when* the evaluation will be undertaken. Based on the evaluand, it may be beneficial to conduct regular and frequent evaluation to change actions if necessary. Alternatively, evaluation may just take place at the end of the program (following a traditional formative-summative approach) if it is deemed to be the most appropriate. By integrating evaluation into overall program design, the evaluation will serve to be more useful to the program as a whole. Beyond this, a carefully thought-out evaluation will also support robust program development by considering what the goals, outcomes, principles, or values are essential to the program.

Developmental evaluation practices can provide significant insight into how the program is progressing, particularly when piloting a new program. Periodic and ongoing reflection is a key component of developmental evaluation, to ensure that programs and projects can evolve and adapt in real time as new information becomes available. Further, since Indigenous knowledge is often non-linear, evaluation and education should also be iterative to reflect these practices which should be embodied within the classroom. This ongoing evaluation may include more participation from students enrolled in the program. Participatory evaluation approaches are found in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous evaluation practice, and can de-construct the evaluator-participant power dynamic that may arise if participants are not given the opportunity to feel like equal partners in the evaluation. Opening up the evaluation to include new ideas, methods, and data collection formats will increase the buy-in from students and will also increase the overall value of the evaluation results.

#### 4. Integrate Indigenous evaluation approaches into the program

Due to the nature of HGI programs, which are inherently cross-cultural, there is the opportunity to explore the integration of Indigenous evaluation approaches. This should only be done if and when appropriate, and these evaluation methods should not be included in tokenistic or trivial ways. There is the possibility that Indigenous approaches to evaluation may allow for students to provide feedback that would not be able to be captured from Western methods of evaluation. However, as identified in Conceptual Recommendation 2, there is a relative lack of information pertaining to Indigenous and culture-specific evaluation practices, so more research and information would need to be gathered to determine whether or not Indigenous evaluation approaches are appropriate in the HGI context, and the ways they could potentially be incorporated into future evaluation design.

### 7.2.3 Reconciliation Studies Semester Recommendations

This final set of recommendations was generated from the analysis conducted in the Results and Analysis chapter, by comparing the four years of the RSS to the best-practice criteria from the conceptual framework. These recommendations, although developed from evaluating the RSS, can be applied to other HGI programming as the organization continues to develop new semesters and opportunities for students to come live and learn on Haida Gwaii.

1. Allow content to be receptive to the current context and climate of reconciliation and decolonization conversations

When examining the landscape between the 2015 planning year and the two pilot program years (2017 & 2018), it appears that the conversations and tone of reconciliation and nation-to-nation relationships has changed. The momentum of the 2015 Liberal federal election has largely been lost, and has been tainted by pipeline purchases, and what has been critically described as “broken promises” from the Trudeau government (Patterson, 2018; Wherry, 2017). The reality of what the terms “reconciliation”, “decolonization”, and “Indigenization” look like are not the same as when the RSS was in the planning phase. The national dialogue on reconciliation changed over the two years between planning and implementation, which led to a different tone in the classroom by the time the RSS piloted.

While this changing dialogue is out of the control of the HGI, these conversations should be reflected in the classroom. Because all HGI courses are accredited through the University of British Columbia (UBC) in the Faculty of Forestry, courses are subject to UBC senate approval and course syllabi are often required months to up to a year in advance in order to meet bureaucratic and academic deadlines. While syllabi are likely unable to change in the short term,

there is still space within the day to day classroom setting to allow for discussions on current issues and to ground the students' learning in the contemporary discourse as much as possible. Conversations on contemporary issues and ongoing news stories took place in the classroom over both years of the program, and this should continue into future years to allow for course content to line up with real-world issues and stories.

As well, related to this recommendation, more flexible evaluation practices which occur frequently throughout the program, will improve the overall flexibility and adaptability of the program itself. By checking in regularly and determining whether or not there are issues outside of the classroom that lend themselves to being incorporated into future courses, the program can respond to the dynamic landscape of these conversations in meaningful, tangible ways.

2. Continue to incorporate Haida (Indigenous) values and knowledge into the classroom through the use of Two-Eyed Seeing

With place-based/land education, and many components of transformative learning, Indigenous and spiritual elements are essential to consider. Particularly given the content of the RSS, Haida laws and values are important to ground the students' learning in place. Students enrolling in HGI programs tend to have been learning from a Western pedagogy, and HGI programs offer the opportunity to blend Western and Indigenous ways of knowing into the classroom.

Environmental and place-based education, which the HGI offers, are already well situated to adopt Two-Eyed Seeing, by further exploring the interconnections between humans, other beings, and ways of knowing and being (McKeon, 2012). Also referred to as Integrative Science, this type of learning is transcultural, contextualizing knowledge in the places it is created and not attempting to juxtapose or "Othering" Indigenous knowledges against Western knowledges

(Hatcher et al., 2009). As well, the practice of Two-Eyed Seeing is currently used by the HGI in their programs, although not explicitly stated in their program advertisements, by bringing Haida pedagogies into the classroom through local instructors and guest lecturers. In doing so, students are able to learn from multiple worldviews and perspectives, and further ground their learning in place.

3. Ensure facilitators, instructors, and teachers can assist students working through the transformative learning process

The transformative learning literature cites the importance of having leaders that can guide the process of transformative learning for students (Kasworm & Bowles, 2012). In order for students to work through their experiences, they should feel supported by their peers and instructors. This may require additional training from the HGI to ensure that students are being provided with adequate resources in the classroom. This also may include reaching out to members of the community who can act as a broader support system outside of the organization for students undergoing the often jarring process of transformative learning.

4. Integrate social innovation concepts into future program design and evaluation

While the HGI itself may not be classified as a social innovation, it is pushing the boundaries of how cross-cultural post-secondary education is conceptualized in Canada. If it is classified as a social innovation, the program should consider taking the following practices into account. First, the evaluation should undertake a complex adaptive systems (CAS) approach to exploring the strengths and weaknesses of the RSS. Simplifying the complexity can be harmful and can miss key linkages between system components that may have emergent properties dictating overall system behaviour. The student experience does not happen in an isolated environment unaffected

by activities happening in the organization, the community, or larger scales. Understanding how actions and activities at large scales may be impacting student experience will help the HGI determine which evaluation comments can be responded to at an institutional level and which are outside of their direct control.

Second, the HGI should consider utilizing the momentum of the back-loop of the adaptive cycle to foster innovation. As the organization begins moving through a period of deterministic chaos and reorganization, this provides the opportunity to try out new and novel ideas, where the resilience of the system overall is still high. The HGI is now an established organization, formally affiliated with UBC and a reputation that precedes the programs themselves. They continue to build and strengthen connections within the communities their programs operate in, and therefore it is unlikely that trying out new or novel ideas will equal “system collapse” for the organization as a whole.

### 7.3 Future Research and Work

As the HGI moves forward in the redesign of the RSS, there are opportunities to follow the institution as it evolves and builds off of the lessons learned from the pilot program. Currently, the HGI is developing two new programs to take place in *Gaw Tlagee Masset* and *Old Massett* in place of the RSS, using the relationships and structures cultivated by the RSS to improve program success and to ground the practices of reconciliation in action. There is interest from the HGI in tracing this transition from reconciliation studies into the likely new direction of community resilience and transformative systems change. Supporting the development and evaluation of these programs over a period of years, likely an opportunity for a PhD student in the near future, will provide a chance to explore the HGI as a social innovation in more depth.

Finally, at a broader level, the framework created from this research should continue to be tested and refined with other programs across the country. While this framework does not intend to be a formal set of “rules” a program must follow, it does offer a starting point with which to evaluate programs. It is important to evaluate any educational programming against a set of best-practice criteria, with the implicit understanding that insight and knowledge must be used to turn this theoretical framework into a set of useable wise-practice recommendations.

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## Appendix A – Template Interview Questions

### Interview Questions - Staff/Instructors/Board

1. What has your experience been with the Haida Gwaii Institute (HGI)?
2. How did the Reconciliation Studies Semester (RSS) come about? What has your role been in the development and implementation of the program?
3. Tell me a story of when the HGI program had a profound impact on a student or students. What did that look like and why do you think that happened?
  - a. *Prompt:* What is something that was really positive, and what was a different situation that didn't work very well?
4. Based on the story you just told and the benefits to this type of place-based learning, how would you evaluate these types of outcomes?
  - a. *Prompt:* in the literature, these transformative experiences are listed as important outcomes but the challenge is how to evaluate these things
5. What do you think are the most important outcomes you would like students to walk away with after participating in the RSS?
  - a. How do you think these outcomes could be measured or documented?
6. What is unique to learning and living on Haida Gwaii that you would like to understand the impact of?
  - a. *Prompt:* for many students it is a brand new experience, living in a remote community, in a new cultural context, and being embedded in a new place
  - b. How do you think that learning could be measured or documented?
7. Currently, the HGI conducts a relatively informal midterm feedback session with students to gauge how the semester is progressing.
  - a. How could this be changed to improve the second half of the term?
  - b. What types of questions should we be asking the students?
  - c. Are there any barriers that limit the adaptation of the program based on student concerns? How could these be fixed?
8. Beyond the student experience, what are some outcomes or benefits other people receive as a result of the HGI?
  - a. *Prompt:* this includes instructors, local educators, community members, staff
  - b. *Prompt:* are any of these benefits specific to the RSS?
9. How do we track the impact the RSS has on instructors, staff, and community members?
  - a. Would this look like a formal interview process, surveys, or some other forum for collecting feedback?
  - b. *Prompt:* Should all instructors receive an end-of-class survey similar to the students to evaluate their perception of the program?
10. Are there any protocols or best practices for reaching out to people in the community to get feedback?



- a. *Prompt:* if in future years we wanted to survey community members about their experiences and interactions with the students, the RSS, and the HGI as a whole, what might that look like?
  - b. What works well for contacting people on-island? What doesn't?
11. Is there anyone else we should talk to or anything we should read?

## **Appendix B – Meeting Summary**

\*Note\* phone meetings have been marked in italics, all other meetings were in person

### **2017**

*November 20, 2017 – RSS Evaluation planning session*

*November 27, 2017 – RSS Evaluation planning session*

November 29, 2017 – RSS Evaluation planning session

December 5, 2017 – RSS Evaluation Session

December 6, 2017 – Natural Resource Science Semester Evaluation

### **2018**

May 8 2018 – SSHRC Insight Grant meetings with academic and community partners

May 8, 2018 – RSS Evaluation and Reflection meeting

May 10, 2018 – SSHRC Insight Grant meetings with academic and community partners

May 11, 2018 – SSHRC Insight Grant meetings with academic and community partners

May 12, 2018 – SSHRC Insight Grant meetings with academic and community partners

*November 7, 2018 – RSS Evaluation meeting for second offering of program*

November 20, 2018 – RSS and Natural Resource Science Semester group activity meeting

### **2019**

*January 22, 2019 – Discussion on RSS moving forward with HGI*

*March 26, 2019 – SSHRC Insight Grant, HGI Professional Development Program Meetings*

May 4, 2019 – HGI Professional Development Program Meetings

May 16, 2019 – RSS Redesign meeting

November 6, 2019 – SSHRC Insight Grant meeting, future research collaborations

November 7, 2019 – SSHRC Insight Grant meeting, future research collaborations

November 8, 2019 – SSHRC Insight Grant meeting, future research collaborations

November 15, 2019 – HGI Professional Development Program Meetings

November 22, 2019 – HGI Professional Development Program Meetings

November 29, 2019 – RSS and Thesis Update Meeting with HGI